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OF POETRY -1919-

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A MISCELLANY OF POETRY - 1919 -

Edited by W. Kean Seymour.
With decorations by Doris Palmer.

Cecil Palmer and Hayward.

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FIRST
EDITION
1919

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To
SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

PREFATORY NOTE

This *Miscellany of Poetry, 1919*, is issued to the public as a truly catholic anthology of contemporary poetry. The poems here printed are new, in the sense that they have not previously been issued by their authors in book form —a fact which surely gives the *Miscellany* an unique place among modern collections.

My deep thanks are due to my fellow-contributors for their generous and hearty co-operation, and to the editors of the *English Review*, *To-day*, *Voices*, *New Witness*, *Observer*, *Saturday Westminster*, *Art and Letters*, *Cambridge Magazine* and the *Nation* for permission to reprint certain poems.

W. K. S.

September, 1919

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A SONG

Laurence Binyon

For Mercy, Courage, Kindness, Mirth,
There is no measure upon earth.
Nay, they wither, root and stem,
If an end be set to them.

Overbrim and overflow,
If your own heart you would know ;
For the spirit born to bless
Lives but in its own excess.

COMMERCIAL

Gross, with protruding ears,
Sleek hair, brisk glance, fleshy and yet alert,
Red, full, and satisfied,
Cased in obtuseness confident not to be hurt,

He sits at a little table
In the crowded congenial glare and noise, jingling
Coin in his pocket; sips
His glass, with hard eye impudently singling

A woman here and there :—
Women and men, they are all priced in his thought,
All commodities staked
In the market, sooner or later sold and bought.

" Were I he," you are thinking,
You with the dreamer's forehead and pure eyes,
" What should I lose ?—All,
All that is worthy the striving for, all my prize,

" All the truth of me, all
Life that is wonder, pity, and fear, requiring
Utter joy, utter pain,
From the heart that the infinite hurts with deep desiring

" Why is it I am not he ?
Chance ? The grace of God ? The mystery's plan ?
He, too, is human stuff,
A kneading of the old, brotherly slime of man.

" Am I a lover of men,
And turn abhorring as from fat slug or snake ?
Lives obstinate in me too
Something the power of angels could not unmake ? "

Laurence Binyon

O self-questioner ! None
Unlocks your answer. Steadily look, nor flinch.
This belongs to your kind,
And knows its aim and fails not itself at a pinch.

It is here in the world and works,
Not done with yet.—Up, then, let the test be tried !
Dare your uttermost, be
Completely, and of your own, like him, be justified.

Trefoil and Quatrefoil !
What shaped those destinied small silent leaves
Or numbered them under the soil ?
I lift my dazzled sight
From grass to sky,
From humming and hot perfume
To scorching, quivering light,
Empty blue !—Why,
As I bury my face afresh
In a sunshot vivid gloom—
Minute infinity's mesh,
Where spearing side by side
Smooth stalk and furred uplift
Their luminous green secrets from the grass,
Tower to a bud and delicately divide—
Do I think of the things unthought
Before man was ?

Bodiless Numbers !
When there was none to explore
Your winding labyrinths occult,
None to delve your ore
Of strange virtue, or do
Your magical business, you
Were there, never old nor new,
Veined in the world and alive :—
Before the Planets, Seven ;
Before these fingers, Five !

You that are globed and single,
Crystal virgins, and you that part,
Melt, and again mingle !
We have hoisted sail in the night

On the oceans that you chart : Laurence
Dark winds carry us onward, on ; Binyon
But you are there before us, silent Answers,
Beyond the bounds of the sun.
You body yourselves in the stars, inscrutable dancers,
Native where we are none.

O inhuman Numbers !
All things change and glide,
Corrupt and crumble, suffer wreck and decay,
But, obstinate dark Integrities, you abide,
And obey but them who obey.
All things else are dyed
In the colours of man's desire :
But you no bribe nor prayer
Avails to soften or sway.
Nothing of me you share,
Yet I cannot think you away.
And if I seek to escape you, still you are there
Stronger than caging pillars of iron
Not to be passed, in an air
Where human wish and word
Fall like a frozen bird.

Music asleep
In pulses of sound, in the waves !
Hidden runes rubbed bright !
Dizzy ladders of thought in the night !
Are you masters or slaves—
Subtlest of man's slaves,—
Shadowy Numbers ?

In a vision I saw
Old vulture Time, feeding
On the flesh of the world ; I saw

Laurence Binyon

The home of our use undated—
Seasons of fruiting and seeding
Withered, and hunger and thirst
Dead, with all they fed on :
Till at last, when Time was sated,
Only you persisted,
Dædal Numbers, sole and same,
Invisible skeleton frame
Of the peopled earth we tread on—
Last, as first.

Because naught can avail
To wound or to tarnish you ;
Because you are neither sold nor bought,
Because you have not the power to fail
But live beyond our furthest thought,
Strange Numbers, of infinite clue,
Beyond fear, beyond ruth,
You strengthen also me
To be in my own truth.

Away, sad thoughts, and teasing
Perplexities, away!
Let other blood go freezing,
We will be wise and gay;
For here is all heart-easing,
An ecstasy at play!

The children dancing, dancing,
Light upon happy feet,
Both eye and heart entrancing,
Mingle, escape, and meet,
Come joyous-eyed advancing
And floatingly retreat.

Now slow, now swifter treading
Their paces timed and true,
An instant poised, then threading
A maze of printless clue,
The music smoothly wedding
To motions ever new.

They launch in chime, and scatter
In looping ripples; they
Are Music's airy matter,
And their feet move, the way
The raindrops shine and patter
On tossing flowers in May.

As if those flowers were singing
For joy of the bright air,
As if you saw them springing
To dance the breeze—so fair
The lissom bodies swinging,
So light the flung-back hair.

Laurence Binyon

And through the mind enchanted
A happy river goes,
By its own young carol haunted
And bringing, where it flows,
What all the world has wanted
But who in this world knows?

FAREWELL TO MATHEMATICS

F. V Branford

I laboured on the anvil of my brain
And beat a metal out of pageantry.
Figure and form I carry in my train
To load the scaffolds of Eternity.
Where the masters are
Building star on star ;
Where, in solemn ritual,
The great Dead Mathematical
Wait and wait and wait for me.

To the deliberate presence of the Sun
(Bright cynosure of every darkling sign,
Wherein all numbers consummate in One,)
Poised on the bolt of an Un-finite line,
As one whose spirit's state,
Is unafraid but desperate,
Through far unfathomed fears,
Through Time to timeless years,
I soar, through Shade to Shine.

They say that on a night there came to Euler,
As eager-eyed he stared upon a star,
And fought the far infinitude, a toiler
Like to himself and me, for things that are
Buried from the eyes alone
Of men whose sight is made of stone,
And led him out in ecstasy,
Over the dim boundary
By the pale gleam of a scimitar.

F. V. Branford

Then Euler, mindful of thy lesser need,
Be thou my pilot in this treacherous hour,
That I be less unworth thy greater meed,
O my strong brother in the halls of power ;
For here and hence I sail
Alone beyond the pale,
Where square and circle coincide,
And the parallels collide,
And perfect pyramids flower.

RETURN

F. V. Branford

The hearts of the mountains were void,
The sea spake foreign tongues,
From the speed of the wind I gat me no breath,
And the temples of Time were as sepulchres.
I walked about the world in the midnight,
I stood under water, and over stars,
I cast Life from me,
I handled Death,
I walked naked into lightning,
I had so great a thirst for God.

* * * * *

The heart of the Mountain overfloweth,
The sea speaketh clear words,
The Ark is brought to the Tabernacle.
Lightnings, that withered in the sky,
Are become great beacons roaring in a wind
I see Death, lying in the arms of Life,
And, in the womb of Death, I see Joy.
I had said 'The spirit of the Earth is white,'
But lo! He is red with joy.
He devoureth the meat of many nations,
He absorbeth a vintage of scarlet.
Though my head be with the stars,
All the flowers of Earth are singing in mine ears.
Though my foot be planted on the sea-bed.
Yet is it shod with the thunder.
Sorrow for Earth Transient is passed away,
Pain of martyr'd splendour is no more.
They have left a fair child in my lap—
A lusty infant shouting to the dawn.

F. V. Branford

The Ogre of midnight hath perished.
He shivered in the glare of the mountain,
He screamed upon the sea-swords,
His bowels rushed out upon the lances of the Wind.
I shall look through the eye of Mountain,
I shall set in my scabbard the sabre of Sea,
And the spear of Wind shall be my hand's delight.
I shall not descend from the Hill.
Never go down to the Valley ;
    For I see, on a snow-crowned peak,
    The glory of the Lord,
    Erect as Orion,
    Belted as to his blade.
But the roots of the mountains mingle with mist,
And raving skeletons run thereon.
    I shall not go hence,
    For here is my Priest,
Who hath broken me in the waters of Disdain.
    Here is my Jester,
Who hath mended me on the wheels of Mirth.
    Here is my Champion,
Who hath confounded mine ancient Enemy
    Ardgay—the slayer of Giants.

OVER THE DEAD.

F. V. Branford

Who in the splendour of a simple thought,
Whether for England or her enemies,
Went in the night, and in the morning died ;
Each bleeding piece of human earth that lies
Stark to the carrion wind, and groaning cries
For burial—each Jesu crucified—
Hath surely won the thing he dearly bought,
For wrong is right, when wrong is greatly wrought.

Yet is the Nazarene no thigh of Thor,
To play on partial fields the puppet king
Bearing the battle down with bloody hand.
Serene he towers above the gods of war,
A naked man where shells go thundering—
The great unchallenged Lord of No-Man's Land.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The men that worked for England
They have their graves at home ;
And bees and birds of England
About the cross can roam.

But they that fought for England,
Following a falling star,
Alas, alas, for England
They have their graves afar.

And they that rule in England
In stately conclave met,
Alas, alas, for England,
They have no graves as yet.

THE BALLAD OF ST. BARBARA

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

(*St. Barbara is the patroness of artillery, and of those who are in fear of sudden death.*)

When the long grey lines came flooding upon Paris in the plain,
We stood and drank of the last free air we never could love again ;
They had led us back from a lost battle, to halt we knew not where,
And stilled us ; and our gaping guns were dumb with our despair.
The grey tribes flowed for ever from the infinite lifeless lands,
And a Norman to a Breton spoke, his chin upon his hands :

" There was an end to Ilium ; and an end came to Rome ;
And a man plays on a painted stage in the land that he calls home.
Arch after arch of triumph, but floor beyond falling floor,
That lead to a low door at last : and beyond there is no door."

The Breton to the Norman spoke, like a little child spake he,
But his sea-blue eyes were empty as his home beside the sea :
" There are more windows in one house than there are eyes to see ;
There are more doors in a man's house, but God has hid the key ;
Ruin is a builder of windows ; her legend witnesseth
Barbara, the saint of gunners, and a stay in sudden death."

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

It seemed the wheel of the worlds stood still an instant
in its turning,
More than the kings of the earth that turned with
the turning of Valmy mill,
While trickled the idle tale and the sea-blue eyes were
burning,
Still as the heart of a whirlwind, the heart of the
world stood still.

" Barbara the beautiful had praise of lute and pen,
Her hair was like a summer night, dark and desired of
men,
Her feet like birds from far away that linger and light in
doubt,
And her face was like a window where a man's first love
looked out.

" Her sire was master of many slaves, a hard man of his
hands ;
They built a tower about her in the desolate golden lands,
Sealed as the tyrants sealed their tombs, planned with
an ancient plan,
And set two windows in the tower, like the two eyes of a
man."

Our guns were set towards the foe ; we had no word
for firing ;
Grey in the gateways of St. Gond the Guard of the
tyrant shone ;
Dark with the fate of a falling star, retiring and
retiring,
The Breton line went backwards and the Breton
tale went on.

" Her father had sailed across the sea from the harbour of Africa, Gilbert Keith
When all the slaves took up their tools for the bidding of Barbara ; Chesterton
She smote the bare wall with her hand, and bade them smite again,
She poured them wealth of wine and meat to stay them in their pain,
And cried through the lifted thunder of thronging hammer and hod :
' Throw open the third window in the third name of God!'
Then the hearts failed and the tools fell ; and far towards the foam
Men saw a shadow on the sands ; and her father coming home."

Speak low and low, along the line the whispered word is flying,
Before the touch, before the time, we may not lose a breath.
Their guns must mash us to the mire and there be no replying
Till the hand is raised to fling us for the final dice to Death.

" ' There were two windows in your tower, Barbara, Barbara,
For all between the sun and moon in the lands of Africa.
Hath a man three eyes, Barbara, a bird three wings,
That you have riven roof and wall to look upon vain things ? '
Her voice was like a wandering thing that falters, yet is free,
Whose soul has drunk in a distant land of the rivers of liberty.

There are more wings than the wind knows, or eyes than see the sun,
In the light of the lost window and the wind of the doors undone ;
For out of the first lattice are the red lands that break
And out of the second lattice, sea like a green snake,
But out of the third lattice, under low eaves like wings
Is a new corner of the sky and the other side of things.' "

It opened in the inmost place an instant beyond uttering,
A casement and a chasm and a thunder of doors undone,
A seraph's strong wing shaken out the shock of its unshuttering
That split the shattered sunlight from a light behind the sun.

" Then he drew sword and drave her where the judges sat and said :
' Cæsar sits above the Gods, Barbara the maid,
Cæsar hath made a treaty with the moon and with the sun
All the gods that men can praise, praise him every one.
There is peace with the anointed of the scarlet oils of Bel,
With the Fish God, where the whirlpool is a winding stair to hell,
With the pathless pyramids of slime, where the mitred negro lifts
To his black cherub in the cloud abominable gifts,
With the leprous silver cities where the dumb priests dance and nod,
But not with the three windows and the last name of God.' "

They are firing, we are falling, and the red skies rend and shiver us . . . Gilbert Keith Chesterton
Barbara, Barbara, we may not loose a breath—
Be at the bursting doors of doom, and in the dark deliver us,
Who loosen the last window on the sun of sudden death.

" Barbara, the beautiful, stood up as a queen set free.
Whose mouth is set to a terrible cup and the trumpet of liberty ;
' I have looked forth from a window that no man now shall bar,
Cæsar's toppling battle towers shall never stretch so far ;
The slaves are dancing in their chains, the child laughs at the rod,
Because of the bird of the three wings, and the third face of God.'
The sword upon his shoulder shifted and shone and fell,
And Barbara lay very small and crumpled like a shell."

What wall upon what hinges turned stands open like a door ?
Too simple for the sight of faith, too huge for human eyes,
What light upon what ancient way shines to a far off floor,
The line of the lost land of France or the plains of Paradise ?

" Cæsar smiled above the gods, his lip of stone was curled,
His iron armies wound like chains round and round the world.
And the strong slayer of his own that cut down flesh for grass,
Smiled, too, and went to his own tower like a walking tower of brass,

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

And the songs ceased and the slaves were dumb : and far towards the foam
Men saw a shadow on the sands ; and her father coming home . . . .

"Blood of his blood upon the sword stood red but never dry,
He wiped it slowly, till the blade was blue as the blue sky :
But the blue sky split with a thunder-crack, spat down a blinding brand,
And all of him lay back and flat as his shadow on the sand."

The touch and the tornado ; all our guns give tongue together,
St. Barbara for the gunnery and God defend the right—
They are stopped and gapped and battered as we blast away the weather,
Building window upon window to our lady of the light ;
For the light is come on Liberty, her foes are falling, falling,
They are reeling, they are running, as the shameful years have run,
She is risen for all the humble, she has heard the conquered calling,
St. Barbara of the Gunners, with her hand upon the gun.

They are burst asunder in the midst that eat of their own flatteries,
Whose lip is curled to order as its barbered hair is curled . . .
—Blast of the beauty of sudden death, St. Barbara of the batteries !
That blow the new white window in the wall of all the world.

For the hand is raised behind us, and the bolt smites hard
Through the rending of the doorways, through the death-gap of the Guard,
For the shout of the Three Colours is in Condé and beyond,
And the Guard is flung for carrion in the graveyard of St. Gond ;
Through Mondemont and out of it, through Morin marsh and on,
With earthquake of salutation the impossible thing is gone ;
Gaul, charioted and charging, great Gaul upon a gun,
Tiptoe on all her thousand years, and trumpeting to the sun,
As day returns, as death returns, swung backward for a span,
Back on the barbarous reign returns the battering-ram of Man.

While that the east held hard and hot like pincers in a forge,
Came like the west wind roaring up the cannon of St. George,
Where the hunt is up and racing over stream and swamp and tarn,
And their batteries, black with battle, hold the bridge-heads of the Marne ;
And across the carnage of the Guard by Paris in the plain
The Normans to the Bretons cried ; and the Bretons cheered again ;
But he that told the tale went home to his house beside the sea
And burned before St. Barbara, the light of the windows three.
Three candles for an unknown thing, never to come again,
That opened like the eye of God on Paris in the plain.

PSYCHE GOES FORTH TO LIFE

What are these tears of loneliness to-night ?
Hark ! In my neighbour's house the music swells,
Joins with the wind and fills the empty skies
And dies away, like echo of old age
Sighing and dying in the heart that fails.
Ah ! the cruel beauty . . . . . how it creeps
Into my home, into my waiting heart !
Who am I that I wait to-night ? . . . . Alas,
Where is the old content of maidenhood,
The calmness and the laughter and the song,
The patient hands unshaken as the needle
Plied to the gentle rhythm that my lips
Murmured, untroubled girlhood at their brink ?

Was that but yesterday ? . . . . How long ago,
How the swift moments flow along the flood.
For yesterday was sweet indifference ;
These little drooping breasts had never known
This pain that swells them out and makes them ache
For Love to touch them, for the nestling lips
To trouble them as a warm lifting wind
Murmurs between two swelled and ripening grapes
Whispering of future wines of mad delight.

Ah, let me learn of this ! A rapture fills
My limbs, and in my womb there stirs a craving
For life . . . life ! Oh, wonderful, the vision that glows
About me in such radiance, the light, the strife
Of music, hue and perfume of the rose.
Oh garden of desire, where one awaits
My coming with the sudden knowledge glowing
Deep in my eyes, made sombre as the day

Is sombre in the summer noon of light.
Now I perceive I am a sacred temple
Long closed about the hidden flame of life,
Closed with white ivories and gliding shapes
Of river waves, and waves upon the sea
Rising and gliding. Every magic curve
Of these unheeded arms, this supple waist—
So are my eyes set on the infinite—
Are ministering music unto life
Calling love forth to worship in my shrine,
To fill this temple with the prophecy
Of further, wider, deeper life to come.

Hark! The music of the night is rising up!
My neighbour's house is all a flame of song.
I must abide until the prelude closes,
Until his heart has ceased its preparation
And he comes forth into the dying year,
Leaves his house of inspiration empty,
And with a loneliness of heart creeps forth
Eagerly into the night, and gropes his way
With outstretched nerveless hands unto my home,
Where I wait, alone! I hear his lips
Murmur again, and moan, and murmur again
Tones of the broken prelude, vainly trying
To call me forth, who am waiting in my home,
Waiting in sweet imprisonment, the bonds
Of love restraining me from running forth
To greet him and to lead him to my soul.

Oh the swift pain, the agony of waiting,
Galled with these terrible sweet bonds of love
That will not let me rise, though my cold hands

Richard Church

Are wrung with grief . . . . for do I not behold
Upon the outer night the rising fire,
The danger and the terror of love's flight ;
Do I not know my lover ; that his eyes
Are blinded by this madness of the skies.
Do I not hear him moaning in the night
For one to lead him to his waiting love,
To lead him to the temple of delight,
To the white ivory casket where his soul
Is set with lovely secrets ? Do I not hear
The little echoes roll, and fade, and fret
About the murmuring foliage of the garden
Wherein the temple lies ? Do I not fear
Lest in the outer glories he be lost
And thwarted of his heart's desire, that flies
Like a dove before his coming, and alights
Within the inner courtyard of my soul
Bearing such messages of him who comes
That all the altars of my love are kindled
To flame ere he approaches, which fades away
And counterfeits the sweetest death that ever
Sighed the approach of day, and left the stars
More bright to be entranced of the dawn ?

Be patient, Oh, my heart ! A little while
And he shall pierce the darkness of the night
That flows between my home and his. The song
The youth, the early light that he has lost
Are as a little strength submerged and drowned
In this fierce rage that bids him seek me out
And take me in the darkness of my home,
And change, and fill me, as the virgin night
Is changed to day, and as the moonlight sky
Is emptied of her sterile ray, and filled

With overflooding light that spills to earth
A golden augury of later fruits
And a diviner birth.
Hark! Hark! . . . . He comes
He has found the temple of his soul's desire . . . ,
Be still, Oh beating heart, be still . . . . be still,
Lest he be troubled now his sacred fire
Creeps through this temple to your inmost shrine.
And I at last am his, and he is mine!

Richard Church

William H. Davies

THE VILLAIN

While joy gave clouds the light of stars,
  That beamed where'er they looked ;
And calves and lambs had tottering knees,
  Excited, while they sucked ;
While every bird enjoyed his song,
Without one thought of harm or wrong—
I turned my head and saw the wind,
  Not far from where I stood,
Dragging the corn by her golden hair,
  Into a dark and lonely wood.

BIRD AND BROOK

William H. Davies

My song, that's bird-like in its kind,
Is in the mind,
Love—in the mind ;
And in my season I am moved
No more or less from being loved ;
No woman's love has power to bring
My song back when I cease to sing ;
Nor can she, when my season's strong,
Prevent my mind from song.

But where I feel your woman's part,
Is in the heart,
Love—in the heart ;
For when that bird of mine broods long,
And I'd be sad without my song,
Your love then makes my heart a brook
That dreams in many a quiet nook,
And makes a steady, murmuring sound
Of joy the whole year round.

William H. Davies

PASSION'S HOUNDS

With mighty leaps and bounds,
I followed Passion's hounds,
  My hot blood had its day;
Lust, Gluttony, and Drink,
I chased to Hell's black brink,
  Both night and day.

I ate like three strong men,
I drank enough for ten,
  Each hour must have its glass:
Yes, Drink and Gluttony
Have starved more brains, say I,
  Than Hunger has.

And now, when I grow old,
And my slow blood is cold,
  And feeble is my breath—
I'm followed by those hounds,
Whose mighty leaps and bounds
  Hunt me to death.

THE TRUTH

William H. Davies

Since I have seen a bird one day,
His head pecked more than half away ;
That hopped about, with but one eye,
Ready to fight again, and die—
Ofttimes since then their private lives
Have spoilt that joy their music gives.

So, when I see this robin now,
Like a red apple on the bough,
And question why he sings so strong,
For love, or for the love of song ;
Or sings, maybe, for that sweet rill
Whose silver tongue is never still—

Ah, now there comes this thought unkind,
Born of the knowledge in my mind :
He sings in triumph that last night
He killed his father in a fight ;
And now he'll take his mother's blood—
The last strong rival for his food.

William H. Davies

THE FORCE OF LOVE

Have I now found an angel in Unrest,
  That wakeful Love is more desired than sleep :
Though you seem calm and gentle, you shall show
  The force of this strong love in me so deep.

Yes, I will make you, though you seem so calm,
  Look from your blue eyes that divinest joy
As was in Juno's, when she made great Jove
  Forget the war and half his heaven in Troy.

And I will press your lips until they mix
  With my poor quality their richer wine :
Be my Parnassus now, and grow more green
  Each upward step towards your top divine.

APRIL'S LAMBS

William H. Davies

Though I was born in April's prime,
With many another lamb,
Yet, thinking now of all my years,
What am I but a tough old ram?

"No woman thinks of years," said she,
"Or any tough old rams,
When she can hear a voice that bleats
As tenderly as any lamb's."

NOUS AUTRES

We never feel the lust of steel
Or fury-woken blood,
We live and die and wonder why
In mud, and mud, and mud,
And horror first and horror last
And Phantom Terror riding past.
We hear and hear the hounds of Fear
Nearer and more near.
We feel their breath . . . .
Only the nights befriend
And mitigate the hell
Of those who ponder, see and hear,
Too well.
The nights, and Death—
The end.
We feel but never fear
His breath.

Day after weary day,
In vain, in vain, in vain,
We turn to Thee and pray,
We cry and cry again—
" O lord of Battle, why
Should we alone be sane ? "

We stifle cries with lightless eyes
And face eternal night ;
We stifle cries to sacrifice
Our eyes for Human Sight.
And many give that men may live,
A life, a limb, a brain,
That fellow men may understand
And be for ever sane.
What matter if we lose a hand

It others wander hand in hand ;
Or lose a foot if others greet
The dawn of peace with dancing feet ;
What matter if we die unheard
If others hear the Poet's Word ?

Because we pay from day to day
The price of sacrifice ;
Because we face each dreary place
Again, again, again.
Lord, set us free from Sanity—
Who feel no fighting thrill ;
Must we remain for ever sane
And never learn to kill ?
No answer came. In very shame
Our long-unheeded cry
Grew bitterly more bitterly,
" O why, O why, O why,
May we not feel the lust of steel
The fury-woken thrill—
For men may learn to live and die
And never learn to kill ? "

October, 1918

Geoffrey Dearmer

SHE TO HIM

The day you died, my Share of All
My soul was tossed
Hither and thither, like a leaf,
And lost, lost, lost,
From sounds and sight,
Beneath the night
Of gloom and grief.

But—
(Hush, for the wind may hear)
Soon, soon you came in solitude :
And we renewed
All happiness.
Now, who shall guess
How close we are, my dear ?
(Hush, for the wind may hear.)

Yet—
Other women wait
Their doors ajar ;
And listen, listen, listen,
For the gate,
And murmur, " Soon, the war
Will seem a far,
Dim agony of sleep."

May I be joyful, too,
That day,
For love of you
May I not turn away
Nor—weep.

MALEDICTION

John Drinkwater

Thrush, across the twilight
Here in the abbey close,
Pouring from your lilac-bough
Note on pebbled note,
Why do you sing so,
Making your song so bright,
Swelling to a throbbing curve
That brave little throat ?

Soon, but a season brief,
The lice among your feathers,
Stiff-winged and aimless-eyed,
With song dead you shall fall ;
Refuse of some clotted ditch,
Seeking no more berries ;
Why with lyric numbers now
Do you the twilight call ?

Proud in your tawny plumes
Mottled in devising,
Singing as though never sang
Bird in close till now—
Sharp are the javelins
Of death that are seeking,
Seeking even simple birds
On a lilac-bough.

Crushed, forlorn, a frozen thing,
For no more nesting,
For no more speckled eggs
In pattered cup of clay,—
Soon your song shall come to this
You who make the twilight yours,
And echoes of the abbey,
At the end of day.

John Drinkwater

In the song I hear it,
The thud of a poor feathered death,
In the swelling throat I see
The splintering of song—
What demon then has worked in me
To tease my brain to bitterness—
In me who have loved bird and tree
So long, so long ?

Until I come to charity,
Until I find peace again,
My curse upon the fiend or god
That will not let me hear
A bird in song upon the bough
But, hovering about the notes,
There chimes the maniac beating
Of black-winged fear.

SPECTRAL

John Drinkwater

What will the years tell ?
Hush ! If it would but speak—
That shadow athwart the stream,
In the gloom of a dream ;

Could my brain but spell
The thought in the brain of that weak
Old ghost that hides in the gloom,
Over there, of the chestnut bloom.

I sit in the broad June light
On the open bank of the river,
In the summer of manhood, young ;
And over the water bright
Is a lair that is overhung
With coned pink blooms that quiver
And droop, till the water's breast
Is of petal and leaf caressed.

And the June sky glares on my prime—
But there in the gloom, with Time,
Huddled, with Time on its back,
Is a shadow that is my wrack.
Yes, it is I in the lair,
Peering and watching me there.

Under the chestnut bloom
My old age hides in the gloom.
And the years to be have been,
Could I spell the lore of that brain.
But the river flows between,
Over the weeds of pain,
Over the snares of death,

John Drinkwater.

Maybe, should I leap to hold,
With myself grown old,
Council there in the gloom
Under the chestnut bloom.

And so, with instruction none,
I go, and leave it there,
My ghost with Time in its lair,
And the things that must yet be done
Tear at my heart unknown,
And the years have tongues of stone
With no syllable to make
For consolation's sake.

But peradventure yet
I shall return
To dare the weeds of death,
And plunge through the coned pink bloom,
And cry on that spectre set
In its silent ring of gloom,
And stay my youth to learn
The thing that my old age saith.

IN WAR TIME

1

Troopship. (s.s. Baltic : Mid-Atlantic : July, 1917)

Dark waters into crystalline brilliance break
About the keel, as through the moonless night
The dark ship moves in its own moving lake
Of phosphorescent cold moon-coloured light ;
And to the clear horizon, all around
Drift pools of fiery beryl flashing bright
As though, still flashing, quenchless, cold and white,
A million moons in the dark green waters drowned.

And staring at the magic with eyes adream,
That never till now have looked upon the sea,
Boys from the Middle-West lounge listlessly
In the unlanterned darkness, boys who go
Beckoned by some unchallengeable gleam
To unknown lands to fight an unknown foe.

The Conscript. 2

Indifferent, flippant, earnest, but all bored,
The doctors sit in the glare of electric light
Watching the endless stream of naked white
Bodies of men for whom their hasty award
Means life or death, maybe, or the living death
Of mangled limbs, blind eyes or darkened brain :
And the chairman, as his monocle falls again,
Pronounces each doom with easy, indifferent breath.

Then suddenly they all shudder as they see
A young man move before them wearily,
Pallid and gaunt as one already dead ;
And they are strangely troubled as he stands
With arms outstretched and drooping, thorn-crowned
head,
The nail-marks glowing in his feet and hands.

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

3

AIR-RAID.

Night shatters in mid-heaven : the bark of guns,
The roar of planes, the crash of bombs, and all
The unshackled skiey pandemonium stuns
The senses to indifference, when a fall
Of masonry near by startles awake,
Tingling wide-eyed, prick-eared, with bristling hair,
Each sense within the body crouched aware
Like some sore-hunted creature in the brake.

Yet side by side we lie in the little room,
Just touching hands, with eyes and ears that strain
Keenly, yet dream-bewildered, through tense gloom,
Listening in helpless stupor of insane
Drugged nightmare panic fantastically wild,
To the quiet breathing of our sleeping child.

4

IN WAR-TIME.

As gaudy flies across a pewter plate,
On the grey disk of the unrippling sea,
Beneath an airless, sullen sky of slate
Dazzled destroyers zig-zag restlessly,
While underneath the sleek and livid tide,
Blind monsters nosing through the soundless deep,
Lean submarines among blind fishes glide
And through primeval weedy forests sweep.

Over the hot grey surface of my mind
Glib, motley rumours zig-zag without rest,
While deep within the darkness of my breast
Monstrous desires, lean, sinister and blind,
Slink through unsounded night and stir the slime
And ooze of oceans of forgotten time.

5

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson

Ragtime.

A minx in khaki struts the limelit boards :
With false moustache, set smirk and ogling eyes
And straddling legs and swinging hips she tries
To swagger it like a soldier, while the chords
Of rampant ragtime jangle, clash, and clatter ;
And over the brassy blare and drumming din
She strains to squirt her squeaky notes and thin
Spirtle of sniggering lascivious patter.

Then out into the jostling Strand I turn,
And down a dark lane to the quiet river,
One stream of silver under the full moon,
And think of how cold searchlights flare and burn
Over dank trenches where men crouch and shiver,
Humming, to keep their hearts up, that same tune.

Leave.

6

Crouched on the crowded deck, we watch the sun
In naked gold leap out of a cold sea
Of shivering silver ; and stretching drowsily
Crampt legs and arms, relieved that night is done
And the slinking, deep-sea peril past, we turn
Westward to see the chilly, sparkling light
Quicken the Wicklow Hills, till jewel-bright
In their Spring freshness of dewy green they burn.

And silent on the deck beside me stands
A soldier, lean and brown, with restless hands,
And eyes that stare unkindling on the life
And rapture of green hills and glistening morn :
He comes from Flanders home to his dead wife,
And I, from England, to my son newborn.

7

BACCHANAL. (November, 1918.)

Into the twilight of Trafalgar Square
They pour from every quarter, banging drums
And tootling penny trumpets : to a blare
Of tin mouth-organs, while a sailor strums
A solitary banjo, lads and girls,
Locked in embraces, in a wild dishevel
Of flags and streaming hair, with curdling skirls
Surge in a frenzied, reeling, panic revel.

Lads who so long have looked death in the face,
Girls who so long have tended death's machines,
Released from the long terror shriek and prance :
And watching them, I see the outrageous dance,
The frantic torches and the tambourines
Tumultuous on the midnight hills of Thrace.

SHEPHERD SINGING RAGTIME

Louis Golding

The shepherd sings :—
" Way down in Dixie,
Way down in Dixie,
Where the hens are dog-gone glad to lay . . . "

With shaded eyes he stands to look
Across the hills where the clouds swoon,
He singing, leans upon his crook,
He sings, he sings no more.
The wind is muffled in the tangled hairs
Of sheep that drift along the noon.
One mild sheep stares
With amber eyes about the pearl-flecked June.
Two skylarks soar
With singing flame
Into the sun whence first they came.
All else is only grasshoppers
Or a brown wing the shepherd stirs,
Who, like a tall tree moving, goes
Where the pale tide of sheep-drift flows.

See ! the sun smites
With sea-drawn lights
The turned wing of a gull that glows
Aslant the violet, the profound
Dome of the mid-June heights.

Alas ! again the grasshoppers,
The birds, the slumber-winging bees,
Alas ! again for those and these
Demure and sweet things drowned ;
Drowned in vain raucous words men made

Where no lark rose with swift and sweet
Ascent and where no dim sheep strayed
About the stone immensities,
Where no sheep strayed and where no bees
Probed any flowers nor swung a blade
Of grass with pollened feet.

He sings :—
" *In Dixie,*
Way down in Dixie,
Where the hens are dog-gone glad to lay
Scrambled eggs in the new-mown hay . . . "

The herring-gulls with peevish cries
Rebuke the man who sings vain words ;
His sheep-dog growls a low complaint,
Then turns to chasing butterflies.
But when the indifferent singing-birds
From midmost down to dimmest shore
Innumerably confirm their songs,
And grasshoppers make summer rhyme
And solemn bees in the wild thyme
Clash cymbals and beat gongs,
The shepherd's words once more are faint,
The shepherd's song once more is thinned
Upon the long course of the wind,
He sings, he sings no more.

Ah, now the sweet monotonies
Of bells that jangle on the sheep
To the low limit of the hills !
Till the blue cup of music spills
Into the boughs of lowland trees ;
Till thence the lowland singings creep

Louis Golding

Into the silenced shepherd's head,
  Creep drowsily through his blood :
The young thrush fluting all he knows,
The ring-dove moaning his false woes,
Almost the rabbit's tiny tread,
  The last unfolding bud.

  But now,
Now a cool word spreads out along the sea.
Now the day's violet is cloud-tipped with gold.
  Now dusk most silently
Fills the hushed day with other wings than birds'.
Now where on foam-crest waves the seagulls rock,
To their cliff-haven go the seagulls thence.
So too the shepherd gathers in his flock,
  Because birds journey to their dens,
  Tired sheep to their still fold.
A dark first bat swoops low and dips
About the shepherd who now sings
A song of timeless evenings ;
For dusk is round him with wide wings,
Dusk murmurs on his moving lips.

There is not mortal man who knows
From whence the shepherd's song arose :
  It came a thousand years ago.

Once the world's shepherds woke to lead
The folded sheep that they might feed
  On green downs where winds blow.

One shepherd sang a golden word.
A thousand miles away one heard.
  One sang it swift, one sang it slow.

Louis Golding

Three skylarks heard, three skylarks told
All shepherds this same song of gold
On all downs where winds blow.

This is the song that shepherds must
Sing till the green downlands be dust
And tide of sheep-drift no more flow :

The song three skylarks told again
To all the sheep and shepherd men
On green downs where winds blow.

THE SINGER OF HIGH STATE

Louis Golding

On hills too harsh for firs to climb,
  Where eagle dare not hatch her brood,
  Upon the peak of solitude,
  With anvils of black granite crude
I forge austerities of rhyme.

Such godlike stuff my spirit drinks
  I make grand odes of tempests there.
  The steel-winged eagle, if he dare
  To cleave these tracts of frozen air,
Hearing such music, swoops and sinks.

Stark clangours of forgotten wars,
  Tumults of primal love and hate,
  Through crags of song reverberate.
  Held by the Singer of High State,
Battalions of the midnight pause.

On hills uplift from Space and Time,
  Upon the peak of Solitude,
  With stars to give my furnace food,
  On anvils of black granite crude
I forge austerities of rhyme.

FREEDOMS

1

Those were our freedoms, and we come to this :
The climbing road that lures the climbing feet
Is lost : there lies no mist above the wheat,
Where-thro' to glimpse the silver precipice,
Far off, about whose base the white seas hiss
In spray ; the world grows narrow and complete ;
We have lost our perils in the certain sweet ;
We have sold our great horizon for a kiss.

To every hill there is a lowly slope,
But some have heights beyond all height—so high
They make new worlds for the adventuring eye.
We for achievement have forgone our hope,
And shall not see another morning ope,
Nor the new moon come into the new sky.

2

Where is our freedom sought, and where to seek ?
The voices of the various world agree
The future's ours : to hope is to be free :
Only to doubt, to fear, is to be weak.
Have you not felt upon your calm clear cheek
The kiss of the bright wind of liberty ?
What more is there to ask, what more to be ?
Peace, peace, my soul, and let the silence speak !

To hope is to be free ? Nay, hope's a slave
To every chance ; hope is the same as fear ;
Hope trembles at the wind, the star, the wave,
The voice, the mood, the music ; hope stands near
The chilly threshold of the waiting grave,
And when the silence speaks, hope does not hear.

3

In the old days came freedom with a sword.
Ev'n so ; but also freedom came with wings
Fanning the faint and purple bloom that clings
To the great twilight where our dreams are stored.
Freedom was what the waters would afford
That yet obeyed the white moon's whisperings,
And freedom leapt and listened in the strings
Of dulcimer and lute and clavichord.

In the old days ? But those old days are now.
O merciful, O bright, O valiant brow,
Can you seek freedom that way and I this ?
Not in the single note is music free,
But where creation's climbing fires agree
In multitudes, in flights, in silences.

4

Shall we mark off our little patch of power
From time's compulsive process ? Shall we sit
With memory, warming our weak hands at it,
And say : " So be it ; we have had one hour " ?
Surely the mountains are a better dower,
With their dark scope and cloudy infinite,
Than small perfection, trivial exquisite ;
'Mid all that dark the brightness of a flower !

Lovers are not themselves : they are more, they are all :
For them are past and future spread together
Like a green landscape lit by golden weather :
For them the rhythmic change conjectural
Of time and place is but the question whether
Their God shall stand (as stand he must) or fall.

5

O cold remembrance, careful-careless kiss,
That does not wake to hope with waking day,
And at the hour of bed-time does not say :
" That was for rapture, that for peace, but this
Burns for the night's more terrible auspices,
And pangs and sweets of doubt and disarray ! "—
Yet in one kiss two hearts found once the way
From perfect ignorance to perfect bliss.

Love has so many voices, low and high,
Such range of reason, such delight of rhyme !
Yet when I asked love such a simple thing
As why the autumn comes where came the spring,
The only soul that answered me was I,
And love was silent then for the first time.

6

Our love is hurt, and the bad world goes on
Moving to its conclusion : in a year
This corn now reaped will come again to ear,
The moon will shine as last night the moon shone;
The tide, whose thought is the moon's thought, will don
The silver livery of subjection. Dear,
Is it not strange that hearts will hope and fear
And break, when our hearts, broken now, are gone ?

If this were true, life's movement would rebel,
And curdle to its source, as blood to the heart
When the cold fires of indignation start
From their obscure lair in the body.—Well,
If for us two to part were just to part
All years would have one pointless tale to tell.

7

The little things, the little restless things,
  The base and barren things, the things that spite
  The day, and trail processions through the night
Of sad remembrances and questionings ;
The poverties, stupidities and stings,
  The silted misery, the hovering blight ;
  The things that block the paths of sound and sight ;
The things that snare our thought and break its wings—

How shall we bear these ?—we who suffer so
  The shattering sacrifice, the huge despair,
  The terrors loosed like lightnings on the air,
    To leave all nature blackened from that curse !
The big things are the enemies we know,
    The little things the traitors. Which are worse ?

8

Now must we gather up and comprehend
  The volume of vicissitude, and take
  Account of loving, for each other's sake,
And ask how love began and how will end
(If there be any end of love, O friend
  Of my worst hours and best desires !)—and stake
  Our all upon the sweetness and the ache
Of what men's stories and God's stars intend.

You have my all : you are my all : you give,
  Out of your bounty and content of soul,
The only strength that makes me fit to live—
  Since earth of spirit takes such heavy toll :
Yet I, the weak, the faint, the fugitive,
  Stand here, an equal part of the great whole.

Laurence Housman

SUMMER NIGHT

Light, like a closing flower, covers to earth her herds,
Out of the world we only watch for the rise of moon ;
Darker the twilight glimmers, dulls the warble of birds,
Over the silent field travels the night-jar's tune.

Here, at my side, so close that even your breath I hear,
Face and form that I love, now with the night made one,
Pray not for any star ! Come not, O moon, for fear
Lest in thy light we lose our way ere the dream be done.

Touch, and clasp, and be close ! Kiss, oh kiss, and be warm !
What is here, O beloved, so like a sea without sound ?
Under the swathe at our feet, swifter than wings of storm,
Summer speeds on his way : Spring lies dead in the ground.

How like a closing flower, clasped by a sleeping bee,
Life folds over us now :—and here in the midst love lies.
O beloved, O flower of night, no morrow's moon shall we see :
Between a dusk and a day we meet, and at dawn Time dies !

THE PALACES OF THE ROSE

Richard Le Gallienne

(A Valentine)

Which of my palaces ? Gold one by one,
Of all the splendid houses of my throne,
This day in grave thought have I over-gone :
Those roofs of stars where I have lived alone
Gladly with God ; those blue-encompassed bowers
Hushed round with lakes, and guarded with still flowers,
Where I have watched a face from eve till morn,
Wondering at being born—
Then on from morn again till the next eve,
Still with strange eyes, unable to believe ;
And yet, though week and month and year went by,
Incredulous of my ensorcelled eye.
O had I thus in trance for ever stayed,
Still were she there in the reed-girdled isle,
And I there still—I who go treading now
Eternity, a-hungered mile by mile :
Because I pressed one kiss upon her brow,—
After a thousand years that seemed an hour
Of looking on my flower,
After that patient planetary fast,
One kiss at last ;
One kiss—and then strange dust that once was she.

Sayest thou, Rose, " What is all this to me ? "
This would I answer, if it pleaseth thee,
Thou Rose and Nightingale so strangely one :
That of my palaces, gold one by one,
I fell a-thinking, pondering which to-day,
The day of the Blessed Saint, Saint Valentine,
Which of those many palaces of mine,
I, with bowed head and lowly bended knee,

Richard Le Gallienne

Might bring to thee.
O which of all my lordly roofs that rise
To kiss the starry skies
May with great beams make safe that golden head,
With all that treasure of hair showered and spread,
Careless as though it were not gold at all—
Yet in the midnight lighting the black hall ;
And all that whiteness lying there as though
It were but driven snow.
Pondering on all these pinnacles and towers,
That, as I come with trumpets, call me lord,
And crown their battlements with girlhood flowers,
I can but think of one. 'Twas not my sword
That won it, nor was it aught I did or dreamed,
But O it is a palace worthy thee !
For all about it flows the eternal sea,
A blue moat guarding an immortal queen ;
And over it an everlasting crown
That, as the moon comes and the sun goes down,
Adds jewel after jewel, gem on gem,
To the august appropriate diadem
Of her, in whom all potencies that are
Wield sceptres and with quiet hands control,
Kind as that fairy wand the evening star,
Or the strong angel that we call the soul.

Thou splendid girl that seemest the mother of all,
Dear Ceres-Aphrodite, with every lure
That draws the bee to honey, with the call
Of moth-winged night to sinners, yet as pure
As the white nun that counts the stars for beads ;
Thou blest Madonna of all broken needs,
Thou Melusine, thou sister of sorrowing man,
Thou wave-like laughter, thou dear sob in the throat,

Thou all-enfolding mercy, and thou song
That gathers up each wild and wandering note,
And takes and breaks and heals and breaks the heart
With the omnipotent tenderness of art ;
And thou Intelligence of rose-leaves made
That makes that little thing the brain afraid.

For thee my Castle of the Spring prepares :
On the four winds are sped my couriers,
For thee the towered trees are hung with green ;
Once more for thee, O queen,
The banquet hall with ancient tapestry
Of woven vines grows fair and still more fair.
And ah ! how in the minstrel gallery
Again there is the sudden string and stir
Of music touching the old instruments,
While on the ancient floor
The rushes as of yore
Nymphs of the house of spring plait for your feet—
Ancestral ornaments.
And everywhere a hurrying to and fro,
And whispers saying, " She is so sweet—so sweet," ;
O violets, be ye not too late to blow,
O daffodils be fleet :
For, when she comes, all must be in its place,
All ready for her entrance at the door,
All gladness and all glory for her face,
All flowers for her flower-feet a floor ;
And, for her sleep at night in that great bed
Where her great locks are spread,
O be ye ready, ye young woodland streams
To sing her back her dreams.

Rose Macaulay

PEACE

June 28th, 1919

From the tennis lawn you can hear the guns going,
    Twenty miles away,
Telling the people of the home counties
    That the peace was signed to-day.
To-night there'll be feasting in the city ;
    They will drink deep and eat—
Keep peace the way you planned you would keep it
    (If we got the Boche beat).
Oh, your plan and your word, they are broken,
    For you neither dine nor dance ;
And there's no peace so quiet, so lasting,
    As the peace you keep in France.

You'll be needing no Covenant of Nations
    To hold your peace intact.
It does not hang on the close guarding
    Of a frail and wordy pact.
When ours screams, shattered and driven,
    Dust down the storming years,
Yours will stand stark, like a grey fortress,
    Blind to the storm's tears.

Our peace . . . . your peace . . . I see neither.
    They are a dream, and a dream.
I only see you laughing on the tennis lawn ;
    And brown and alive you seem,
As you stoop over the tall red foxglove,
    (It flowers again this year)

And imprison within a freckled bell
A bee, wild with fear . . . .

Rose Macaulay

* * *

Oh, you cannot hear the noisy guns going :
You sleep too far away.
It is nothing to you, who have your own peace,
That our peace was signed to-day.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

THE CYNDUS

1

Beneath th' triumphal blue, th' riotous day,
Her silvern galley beats the black flood white,
Whilst the long sillage hoards some close delight
Of incense, flutes, and stir of silk array.
From forth the pompous poop, her royal sway,
Near where the mystic hawk stands poised for flight,
The Queen, erect, stares out, flushed, exquisite,
Like some great golden bird that spies her prey.

The tryst is kept : her spoilèd warrior there :
And the brown gipsy in the swooning air
Spreads amber arms the purple glow stains red ;
Nor hath she seen, nor known with shuddering breath,
Symbols of Doom, those Youths Divine who shed
Rose-leaves on sombre deeps—Desire and Death.

BATTLE AT SUNSET

2

The shock was stern : the cohorts near to rout.
Staying the flight, tribune, centurion,
From heat of carnage 'nēath th' enduring sun
Breathe blood, and smell its savour as they shout.
With haggard eyes, that count the dead about,
Each spearman marks the archers, all undone,
Whirl like heaped leaves before Euroclydon.
From the brown faces sweat falls gout by gout.

That fated hour—with many a shaft stuck o'er,
Streaming in burnished brass and purple weed,
Red with the scarlet flux of wounds full sore,
With trumpets shrilling forth their urgent need,
Against the sunset, on his frighted steed—
Surged, glorious, the ensanguined Emperor.

Eugene Mason

3

From the high terrace they might see far down,
  Egypt asleep, by plague of heat opprest ;
  Old Father Nile, in beauty manifest,
Roll his rich flood towards many a famous town.
And lo, the Roman felt 'neath mail and gown
  (Captain and slave, soothing a child to rest)
  Relax and fail on his triumphant breast
That body made for love, by love o'erthrown.

Lifting her silken head and blanchèd face
To him whose senses reel at such rare grace
  And piercing sweetness, she prefers her lips ;
But stooping close, his ardent eyes behold
In those deep eyes, sewn thick with points of gold,
  A hazardous sea bestrewn with fleeing ships.

From the French of José Maria de Heredia

Theodore Maynard

DIRGE

If on a day it should befall
That love must have her funeral ;
And men weep tears that love is dead,
That never more her gracious head
Can turn to meet their eyes and hold
Their hearts with chains of silky gold ;
That never more her hands can be
As dear as was virginity ;
That in her coffin there is laid
Beauty, the body of a maid,
The body of one so piteous-sweet,
With candles burning at her feet
And cowled monks singing requiem . . . .

I think I would not go with them,
Her lordly lovers, to the place
Where lies that lovely mournful face,
That curving throat and marvellous hair
Under the sconces' yellow flare—
How shall a man be comforted
When love is dead, when love is dead ?

But I would make my moan apart,
Keeping my dreams within my heart—
For guarded as a sepulchre
Shall be the house I built for her
Of silver spires and pinnacles
With carillons of mellow bells,
A house of song for her delight
Whose joy was as the strong sunlight—
But now love's ultimate word is said,
For love is dead, for love is dead !

But even should all hope be lost
Some memory, like a thin white ghost,
Might stealthily move in midnight hours
Among those silent sacred towers,
And glimmer on the moonlit lawn
Until the cold ironic dawn
Arises from her saffron bed—
When love is dead, when love is dead

Theodore
Maynard

DESIDERAVI

Lest, tortured by the world's strong sin,
  Her little bruised heart should die—
Give her your heart to shelter in,
  O earth and sky!

Kneel, sun, to clothe her round about
  With rays to keep her body warm;
And, kind moon, shut the shadows out
  That work her harm.

Yes, even shield her from my will's
  Wild folly—hold her safe and close!—
For my rough hand in touching spills
  Life from the rose.

But teach me, too, that I may learn
  Your passion classical and cool;
To me, who tremble so and burn,
  Be pitiful!

LAUS DEO!

Praise! that when thick night circled over me
In chaos ere my time or world began,
Thy finger shaped my body cunningly,
Thy thought conceived me ere I was a man!
Thy Spirit breathed upon me in the dark
Wherein I strangely grew,
Bestowing glowing powers to the spark
The mouth of heaven blew!

Praise! that a babe I leapt upon the world
Spread at my feet in its magnificence,
With trees as giants, flowers as flags unfurled,
And rains as diamonds in their excellence!
Praise! for the solemn splendour of surprise
That came with breaking day;
For all the ranks of stars that met my eyes
When sunset burned away!

Praise! that there burst on my unfolding heart
The coloured radiance of leafy June,
With choirs of song-birds perfected in art,
And nightingales beneath the summer moon—
Praise! that this beauty, an unravished bride
Doth hold her lover still;
Doth hide and beckon, laugh at me, and hide
Upon each grassy hill.

Praise! that I know the dear capricious sky
In every infinitely varied mood—
Yet under her maternal wings can lie
The smallest chick among her countless brood!
Praise! that I hear the strong winds wildly race
Their chariots on the sea,
But feel them lift my hair and stroke my face
Softly and tenderly!

Theodore Maynard

Praise ! for the joy and gladness thou didst send,
When I have sat in gracious fellowship
In firelight for an evening with a friend,
When wine and magic entered at the lip !
For laughter which the fates can overthrow
Thy mercy doth accord—
To Thee, who didst my godlike joy bestow,
I lift my glass, O Lord !

Praise ! that a lady leaning from her height,
A lady pitiful, a tender maid,
A queen majestical unto my sight,
Spoke words of love to me, and sweetly laid
Her hand within my own unworthy hand !
(Rise, soul, to greet thy guest,
Mysterious love, whom none shall understand,
Though love be all confessed !)

Praise ! that upon my bent and bleeding back
Was stretched some share of Thy redeeming cross,
Some poverty as largess for my lack,
Some loss that shall prevent my utter loss !
Praise ! that thou gavest me to keep joy sweet
The sanguine salt of pain !
Praise ! for the weariness of questing feet
That else might quest in vain !

AFORETIME

T. Sturge Moore

TO GORDON BOTTOMLEY

Dear exile from the hurrying crowd,
At work I muse to you aloud ;
Thought on my anvil softens, glows,
And I forget our art has foes ;
For life, the mother of beauty, seems
A joyous sleep with waking dreams.
Then the toy armoury of the brain
Opining, judging, looks as vain
As trowels silver gilt for use
Of mayors and kings, who have to lay
Foundation stones in hope they may
Be honoured for walls others build.
I, in amicable muse,
With fathomless wonder only filled,
Whisper over to your ear
Listening two hundred odd miles north,
And give thought chase that, were you here,
Our talk would never run to earth.

Man can answer no momentous question :
Whence comes his spirit ? Has it lived before ?
Reason fails ; hot springs of feeling spout
Their snowy columns high in the dim land
Of his surmise—violent divine decisions
That often rule him : and at times he views
Portraits of places he has never been to,
Yet more minute and vivid than remembrance,
Of boyhood homes, sail between sleep and waking
Like some mirage, refuting all experience
With topsy-turvy ships,
That steals by in dead calms through tropic haze :
And many a man in his climacteric years,

T. Sturge Moore

Thoughts and remembered words have roused from sleep
With knowledge that he lacked on lying down :
And I, lapped in a trance of reverie, doubt
Some spore of episodes
Anterior far beyond this body's birth,
Dispersed like puffs of dust impalpable,
Wind-carried round this globe for centuries,
May, breathed with common air, yet swim the blood,
And striking root in this or that brain, raise
Imaginations unaccountable ;
One such seems half-implied in all I am,
And many times re-pondered shapes like this :

A child myself I watched a woman loll
Like to a clot of seaweed thrown ashore ;
Heavy and limp as cloth soaked in black dye,
She glooms the noontide dazzle where a bay
Bites into vineyarded flats close-fenced by hills,
Over whose tops lap forests of cork and fir
And reach in places half down their rough slopes.
Lower, some few cleared fields square on the thickets
Of junipers and longer thorns than furze
So clumped that they are trackless even for goats
I know two things about that woman : first
She is a slave and I am free, and next
As mothers need their sons' love she needs mine.
Longings to utter fond compassionate sounds
Stir through me, checked by knowing wiser folk
Reprobate such indulgence. Ill at ease,
Mute, yet her captive, I thrust brown toes through
Loose sand no daily large tides overwhelm
To cake and roll it firm and smooth and clean
As the Atlantic remakes shores, you know.
But there, like trailing skirts, long flaws of wind
Obliterate the prints feet during calms

Track over and over its always lonely stretch, T. Sturge
Till some will have it ghosts must rove at night ; Moore
For folk by day are rare, yet a still week
Leaves hardly ten yards anywhere uncrossed ;
Tempest spreads all revirginate like snow,
Half burying dead wood snapped off from tossed trees,
Since right along the foreshore, out of reach
Of furious driven waves, three hundred pines
Straggle the marches between sand and soil.
Like maps of stone-walled fields their branching roots
Hold the silt still so that thin grass grows there,
Its blades whitened with travelling powdery drift
The besom of the lightest breeze sets stirring.
That woman's gaze toils worn from remote years,
Yet forward yearns through the bright spacious noon,
Beyond the farthest isle, whose filmy shape
Floats faint on the sea-line.
I, scooping grains up with the frail half-shell
Pale green and white-lined of sea-urchin, knew
What her eyes sought as often children know
Of grief or sin they could not name or think of
Yet sooth or shrink from, so I saw and longed
To heal her tender wound and yet said naught.
The energy of bygone joy and pain
Had left her listless figure charged with magic
That caught and held my idleness near hers.
Resentful of her power, my spirit chafed
Against its own deep pity, as though it were
Raised ghost and she the witch had bid it haunt me.
What's more I knew this slave by rights should glean
And faggot drift-wood, not lounge there and waste
My father's food dreaming his time away.
For then as now the common-minded rich
Grudged ease to those whose toil brought them in means
For every waste of life. At length I spoke,

Insulting both my inarticulate soul
And her with acted anger : " Lazy wretch,
Is it for eyes like yours to watch the sea
As though you waited for a homing ship ?
My father might with reason spend his hours
Scanning the far horizon ; for his Swan
Whose outward lading was full half a vintage
Is now months overdue." She turned on me
Her languor knit and, through its homespun wrap,
Her muscular frame gave hints of rebel will,
While those great caves of night, her eyes, faced mine,
Dread with the silence of unuttered wrongs :
At last she spoke as one who must be heeded.
Truly I am not clear
Whether her meaning was conveyed in words
(She mingled accents of an eastern tongue
With deformed phrases of our native Latin)
Or whether thought from her gaze poured through mine.
The gravity of recollected life
Was hers, condensed and, like a vision, flashed
Suddenly on the guilty mind, a whole
Compact, no longer a mere tedious string
Of moments negligible, each so small
As they were lived, but stark like a slain man
Who would alive have been ourself with twice
The skill, the knowledge, the vitality
Actually ours. Yea, as a tree may view
With fingerless boughs and lorn pole impotent,
An elephant gorged upon its leaves depart,
Men often have reviewed an unwieldy past,
That like a feasted Mammoth, leisured and slow,
Turned its back on their warped bones. Even thus,
Momentous with reproach, her grave regard
Made me feel mean, cashiered of rank and right,
My limbs that twelve good years had nursed were numbed

And all their fidgety quicksilver grew stiff,
Novel and fevering hallucinations
Invaded my attention. So daylight
When shutters are thrown back spreads through a house;
As then the dreams and terrors of the night
Decamp, so from my mind were driven
All its own thoughts and feelings. Close she leant
Propped on a swarthy arm, while the other helped
With eloquent gesture potent as wizard wand,
Veil the world off as with an airy web,
Or flowing tent a-gleam with pictured folds.
These tauten and distend—one sea of wheat,
Islanded with black cities, borders now
The voluminous blue pavilion of day.
There-under to the nearest of those towns
This woman younger by ten years made haste
While at her side ran a small boy of six.
They neared the walls, half a huge double gate
Lay prostrate, though the other by stone hinges
Hung to its flanking tower. The path they followed
Threaded an old paved road whose flags were edged
With dry grass and dry weeds, even cactuses
Had pushed the stones up or found root in muck heaps:
The path struck up the slope of the fallen door,
Basalt like midnight, o'er which dusty feet
Had greyed a passage, for it rested on
Some débris fallen from the left-hand tower,
And from its upper edge rude blocks like steps
Led down into the straight main street, that ran
Past eyeless buildings mined as it were from coal,
And earthquake-raised to light. Palaces and
Roofless wide-flighted colonnaded temples,
The uncemented walls piled-plumb with blocks
Squared, polished, fitted with dæmonic patience.
Each gaping threshold high again as need be

T. Sturge Moore

Waited a nine-foot lord to enter hall,
Where the least draughty corner sheltered now
Half-tented hut or improvised small home
For Arab, brown, light-footed and proud-necked
As was this woman with the compelling voice.
Their present hutched and hived within that past
As bees in the parchment chest of Samson's lion ;
And all seem conscious that their life was sweet,
Like mice who clean their faces after meals
And have such grace of movement, when unscared,
As wins the admiration even of those
Whose stores they rob and soil. I saw her eyes
Young with contentment in her son
And smaller babe and in their handsome sire,
And knew that many a supper had been relished
With hearts as joyous as waited while she cooked
And served upon returning to their cot
In hall where once far other hearts caroused.
They and their tribe could never reap a tithe
Of the vast harvest rustling round those ruins,
And over which a half-moon soon set forth
From black hills mounded up both east and south,
While north-west her light played on distant summits ;
All the huge interspace floored with standing corn
Which kings afar send soldiery to reap,
Who now, beside a long canal cut straight
In ancient days, have pitched their noisy camp
Which on that vast staid silence makes a bruise
Of blare and riot that its robust health
Will certainly heal in a brief lapse of time.

One night, re-thought on after ten whole years,
Is like the condor high above the Andes,
A speck with difficulty found again
Once the attention quits it. And I next
Descried our woman under breathless noon,

Bathing in a clear lane of gliding water
Whose banks seem lonely as the path of light
Crossing mid ocean south of Capricorn.
Her son steals warily after a butterfly
And is as hushed with hope to capture it
As are the birds with heat. An insect hum
Circles the spot as round a cymbal's rim,
Long after it has clanged, tingles a throb
Which in a dream forgets the parent sound,
Oppressed by this protracted and awe-filled pause,
She hardly dares to wade the stream and moves
As though in dread to wake some sleeping god,
Yet still she nears and nears the further bank
Where there is shade under a shumac's eaves.
The brilliant surface cut her right in two,
And the reflection of her bronzed torso
Hid all beneath the polished gliding mirror ;
How her face listened to that sleep divine
Whose audible breath was tuned to dreams of bliss !

T. Sturge Moore

Sudden, as though the woof of heaven were torn,
A strident shout rang from some neighbour shrubs
Three Nubian soldiers ran upon her with
Delighted oily faces. Screaming first
Commands to her small son to make for home,
She laboured to recross the current as when
In nightmares the scared soul expects to die
Tortured by mutiny in limbs like lead,
But as the playful lion of the sea
Climbs the rock ledges hard by Fingal's cave
To throw himself down into deep green baths,
While others barking follow his vigorous lead,
The foremost Abyssinian threw his weight
Before her with a splash that hid them both,
As the explosion of light-filled liquid parcels

Shot forth in all directions. In his arms
She re-appeared, a tragic terrified face
Beside his coarse one laughing with success.
Squeezing her with a pantomime of love,
He turns to follow an arrow with his eyes
That his companion, still upon the bank,
Has aimed towards her son's small head that bobbed
Like a black cork across the basking corn.
But from the level of the sunk stream bed
Neither he nor she could see the target aimed at,
Yet in the pause they heard the poor child scream ;
A second arrow, second scream ; she fought,
But soon like bundle bound, hung o'er his shoulder,
Helpless as a mouse in cat's mouth carried off
In search of quiet, there to play with it.
Those arrows missed ?—or did they not ? The child
Shrieked twice, yet scarcely like a wounded thing
She thought and hoped and still but thinks and hopes.
Where is that boy ? Where is her husband now ?
While she submitted body to force and soul
To the great shuddering violence of despair
How had their life progressed in that far place ?
Compassion fused my consciousness with hers
And second-sighted eloquence arose
To claim my mind for rostrum,
But obstinately tranced
My eyes clung to their vision ;
For regions to explore allure the boy
No stretch of thought or sea of feeling tempts.
Entranced, the mind I then had, haunted
Those basalt ruins. High on sable towers
Some silky patriarchal goat appears
And ponders silent streets, or suddenly
Some nanny, her huge bag swollen with milk,
Trots out on galleries that unfenced run

Round vacant courts, there, stopped by plaintive kids, Lets them complete their meal. While always, always, Throughout, those mazed, sullen and sun-soaked walls, The steady, healthy wind, Which often blows for weeks without a lull Across that upland plain, Flutes staidly. Moaning Continuously as seas Or forests before storm, And, gathering moment, Articulated by her woe, begins With second-sighted eloquence To wail through me, Nigh as unheeded, As though it still had been Meaningless wind. T. Sturge Moore

For ah ! the heart is cowed
And dares not use her strength,
Hears the kind impulse plead
Against the common avaricious fear,
Grants it but life, though sovereignty was due
Or doles it sway but one day out of seven
Or one a year.

So, so, and ever, so
In the close-curtained court
Those causes are deferred
Which most import ;
These wait man's leisure.
These daily matters elbow ;
Merely because
His panic meanness
Jibs blindly ere it hear
What wisdom has prepared,

T. Sturge Moore

Bolts headlong ere it see
Her face unfold its smile.
Man after man, race after race
Drops jaded by the iterancy
Of petty fear.
Even as horses on the green steppes grazing,
Hundreds scattered through lonely peacefulness,
If shadow of cloud or red fox breaking earth
Delude but one with dream of a stealthy foe,
All are stampeded.
Their frantic torrent draws in,
With dire attraction, cumulative force,
Stragglers grazing miles from where it started ;
On it thunders quite devoid of meaning.
The tender private soul
Thus takes contagion from the sordid crowd,
And shying at mere dread of loss,
Loses the whole of life.
Thus, in the vortex of a base turmoil,
Those myriad million energies wear down
That might have raised mankind
To live the life of gods.
Had but my soul been his,
As his was mine,
Those wind-resembling accents
Had found fit auditor.
Their second-sighted eloquence,
Welcomed with acclamation,
Had fired action.
But that was ages since : he was not then
What now I am,
Who have no longer
The opportunity then mine, then missed,—
Who still am dazed and troubled
Surmising others mine, others missed.

Passionate, never-wearied voice
Tombed in thy brittle shell,
This human heart
Thou croonest age on age,
" Give and ask not,
Help and blame not,"
Heeded less than large and mottled cowry
The which at least some child may hold to ear
All smiles to listen.

T. Sturge Moore

Thou findest parables ;
With fond imagination
Adorning truth
For the successive
Unpersuaded
Generations.

This boy, myself that was,
Musing visions by that woman raised,
Watched that land she came from, towned with ruins
Send mile-long files of laden camels out
With grain to hostile cities,—
Knew too the blue entrancing plain of waters
Teemed with fresh shoals, buoyed up indifferently,
Fisher—trader—pirate bark,—
Even the straight thought whispered at his ear,
" Thy lips might join with hers as with some cousin's,
Here, now, at noon,
Hugging her bereavéd sadness close,
And still, to-night, with equal satisfaction,
Thy mother's blind contentment with her son."
While half-seduced, half-chafed, his mind was shaken
As with conflicting gusts a choppy sea,
His eyes, still greedy of their visions,
Fastened a swarthy town enisled in wheat,

T. Sturge Moore

And to the ebon threshold of each house,
Conjured forth the man that each was planned for :
Great creatures smiling with his father's smile,
Muscular, wealthy and self-satisfied,
Wearing loud-coloured raiment, earrings, chains,
Armlet and buckle, all of clanking gold.
His spirit drank from theirs great draughts of pride
And read their minds more clearly than his own ;
All, with one counsel like a chorus, dinned
His soul that then was mine,
With truths well-proved in action.
" Love is chaos,
For order's sake
Whatever must be, should be,"
Roared those bulls of Bashan.
Then their proud chant argued,
" How should this woman know
Her little lad again,
Who either now is bones
Under the fertile field,
Or well nigh a grown man ?
Say they should cross at market
Both slaves would pass on, not a start the wiser.
What is she then to him
Or he to her
After these years ?
To drag a life that might have been but is not
With toil of mind and heart,
Through dreary year on year,
Neglecting for its sake the life that is,
Spells folly and ingratitude to those
Who treat their slaves well.
Thy father's household and thyself should be
More to her now than those who may be dead,
The place she lives in dearer

Than any unattainable far land
Where she is more forgotten than old dreams.
Why make the day of evil worse
By dwelling on it after it has past ?
Near things alone are real,
Now is the whole of time :
Places beyond the horizon are but pictures ;
Memory cheats the eye with an illusion ! "

T. Sturge Moore

" Your thoughts are sound, bold builders,
I am my father's son.
Behold this home-shore, these our hills, this bay,
And this our slave !—
Up, work, look sharp about it ! "
Bounding a foot and fast retiring from her,
I stoop for stones strewn thick about the sand,
Aim them, fling them,
And, as my idle arm resumes the knack,
Score a hit and laugh
To see her stumble hurt, behind the pine trunks.
" Unless you work, I throw again,
To it and steady at it.
Mark me, drab, we Camilli
Mean what we say."
Stone after stone still flies,
But aimed to knock chips from the pine-boles now ;
For she is busy gathering sticks, increasing
Her distance as she may. The noon is sultry,
Heated and clammy, I,
Towards the live waves turning, slip my tunic,
Then run in naked.
Cooled and soothed by swimming,
Both mind and heart from their late tumult tuned
To placid acquiescent health,

T. Sturge Moore

I float, suspended in the limpid water,
Passive, rhythmically governed ;
So tranced worlds travel the dark shoreless ether.

" Where should this stream of pictures tend ? "
No, Bottomley, you will not ask ;
To you I am quite free to send
The unexpected, unexplained,
You will not take me thus to task.

So they be painted well, they live ;
If ill, they yet may cling to fame
Associated with your name.
In which case you, and not I, give
That we are both contented with.

DOWN HERE THE HAWTHORN

Thomas Moult

Down here the hawthorn . . . .
And a stir of wings,
Spring-lit wings that wake
Sudden tumult in the brake,
Tumult of blossom tide, tumult of foaming mist
Where the bright bird's tumultuous feathers kissed.
White mists are blinding me,
White mist of hedgerow, white mist of wings.
    Down here the hawthorn
And a stir of wings . . . .
Softly swishing, swift with spray
All along the green laneway
Dewdimmed, sunwashed, windsweet and winter-free
They flash upon the light,
They swing across the sight,
I cannot see, I cannot see ! . . .

Down here the flowering hawthorn flings
Sleet of petals, petalled shells
Spread the coloured air that sings
Magic and a myriad spells
Spun by my count of Springs.
    Down here the hawthorn . . . .
And the flower-foam stirred
By a Spring-lit bird.
White hawthorn mist is blinding me.
I lower my gaze, and on this old
Brown bridle road
Crusted with golden moss and mould
The hedgerow flings
Lush carpetings,
Blossom woven carpetings light lain
Under the farmer's lumbering load ;

Thomas Moult

And, floating past the spent March wrack,
The footstep trail, the traveller's track.
Down here the hawthorn . . . .
White mists are blinding me,
White mists that rime the fresh green bank
Where fernleaf-fall
And sorrel tall
Upwaving, rank on rank,
Shall flush the bed whereon the windflowers sank.

I turn these Spring-bewildered eyes of mine,
I seek above the surf of hedgerow line
Where peeping branches reach, and reaching twine
Faint cherry or plum or eglantine.
But with pretence of whisperings
The year's young mischief-wind shall take
By storm these shy striplings,
And soon or later shake
Their slender limbs, and make
Free with their clinging may—
Strip from them in a single boisterous day
Their first and last vesture of pale bloom spray.
So, as to meet such lack
In bush or brack,
The kindly hedgerows make
Sure of a Springtime for these frailer things,
Shedding on each the lavish creamthorn flake.
Down here the hawthorn . . . .
On all the green leaf-clusters round me clings
Thickly a spray of gentle blossomings
Everywhere as with many bells
The young year with white magic swells.
The morning rings.
White mist is blinding me,
I cannot see, I cannot see!

Blind grows the coloured air that sings — Thomas Moult
The marvel of a myriad spells
Spun by my count of Springs.
Sleet of petals, petalled shells
Falling with sudden poignancy
(As the sleet stings)
Upon the lightheart-hope which only clear sight knows.
And slowly drifts,
Lingering among the snows
Nor, though the snow lifts,
Ever goes
The wistful heartache as the fresh Spring flows
With slipping sureness to the time of the rose, and the withered rose.
Down here the hawthorn . . . .
And heaping blossom stirred
By a joy-swift bird.
White mists are blinding me,
White mist of hedgerow, white mist of wings.
The bird's flight flings
Deep carpetings
Over the wrack
Of my life's track.
Down here the hawthorn . . . .
The air of coloured years is blurred
By the Spring, by a bird.
White mists are blinding me,
White mists on the years to be.
I cannot see, I cannot see . . . .

Thomas Moult

INVOCATION

Hurl down, harsh hills, your bitterness
Of wind and storm.
Stem ye the drift of herded men
With your uncouthness
So, tasting of your power, they press
Back shrinking where upon their warm
Safe ways of smoothness
They feed their various lusts again.

Guard ye, wild hills, with scar and whip
Your outlawry
Lest alien-hearted pigmies tame
Your trackless boulders,
And with their unclean cunning slip
The leash of civilry
Fast round your shoulders.
O keep ye from that shame.

Or they shall surely come, black hordes
Swarming as lice
With their obscenities and greed
Across your fastness,
Even your peaks that swing white swords,
Rent, splintered ice
Into the vastness
Of skies where fanged winds feed.

Hurl down, harsh hills, your bitterness,
Guard ye with flail
Of shattering wind and thong of sleet
Your pride uplifting
To the impaled stars ; be pitiless
Before this unquiet trail
Of man-herds drifting
Against your stone still feet.

PAEAN

Robert Nichols

On Seeing a Portrait of Blake.

Something moves in his dust,
Flame sleeps beneath the crust;
O whence had he those eyes
Lit with celestial surprise?
From what world blew that gust?
Are we near to Paradise?

Gather a chaplet of five stars
And the opalescent hue
Of the aureole brightness cast—
Red, hardly red, and blue, scarce blue,—
Round th' immaculate frosty moon,
Splintering light in glacial spars,
When November's loudening blast
Sweeps heaven's floor till burnishèd
More crystal than at August noon,
So we fit radiance may cast
Before his feet, around his head.

How visits he an earthly place,
Wanders among a mortal race?
How were his footsteps led
That still about his face
Lingers a ghostly trace
Of a secret influence shed
By a Hand the world denies,
In a land her most son flies,
As a gift upon him thrust
For an end he knoweth not,
Yet will shine because he must,

Robert Nichols

Shine and sing because he must
Reap a wrong he soweth not
Of contempt anger and distrust
For a world which boweth not
To the Flame which binds our dust.

Go net the moon, go snare the sun,
Set them upon his either hand!
Beneath his heels Leviathan
Roll your thick coils! His head be spanned
By rainbows tripled! Set a gem
At the Cross-scabbard of his sword
Whiter than lambwool or lilystem!
Place on his brow the diadem
Given the warrior of the Lord,
The crown-turrets of Jerusalem!

THE FALL

Eden Phillpotts

I'll sing a song of kings and queens
And falling leaves and flying rain,
With Time to mow, and Fate who gleans
Their good and evil, boon and bane.

I'll sing a song of leaves and rains
And flying queens and falling kings.
Yet doubt not reason still remains
Snug hidden at the core of things.

For every year an autumn brings
To round the root and fat the sheaves
And haply garner queens and kings
With falling rain and flying leaves.

The rain is salt with tears of queens
The leaves are red with blood of kings ;
Unknowing what the mystery means
We puzzle at these splendid things.

For why great kings and rains should fall,
And wherefore leaves and queens should fly,
Or such rare wonders be at all,
You cannot tell ; no more can I.

Yet this we know : new leaves and rain
Anon shall crown the vernal scene,
But dust of dynasts not again
Blows up into a king or queen.

GHOSTIES AT THE WEDDING.

Turn down a glass afore his place ;
Draw up the dog-eared chair ;
For though we shall not see his face,
I think he will be here
Our wedding day to share.

Turn up the glass where she would be
And put a red rose there.
Her quick, grey eyes we cannot see,
But weren't they everywhere,
And shall not they be here ?

Though them old blids are in the grave
And their good light's gone out,
We'd sooner their kind ghosties have
Than all the living rout
As will be there no doubt.

For some are dead as cannot die,
Some flown as cannot flee.
You still do fancy 'em near by.
'Tis so with him and she,
At any rate to we.

FOUR LYRICS

Arthur K. Sabin

I.

When old Anacreon sang the wine
Which made his utterance divine,
Perchance the eyes he gazed into
Were lucent as the sun-touched dew—
Brighter, perchance, than yours ; and yet
Eyes like yours, smoulderingly lit
With the calm passion of the spirit,
No young Greek maid did e'er inherit . . . .
Ah ! twenty years are not enough
To mould to such celestial stuff
A soul, my dear, as yours is moulded,
Wherein all dreams of life lie folded,
And through whose doors a friend may slip
Into serene companionship.

II.

She came, as one who in the light
Of many a sunset hour had grown
Half sad, half glad, because the night
So soon about her would be thrown.
With melancholy ages old,
And laughter fragrant as the Spring,
She came, and in her low voice told
Tales of rich joy and sorrowing.
She led me to her garden, fair
With flowers I love and whispering trees,
And to her arbour sheltered there
In peace, all redolent of peace.
With rapt delight of halting speech,
And commune, such as those have felt
Whose minds move silent each by each,
Whose hopes are kindred hopes, we dwelt.

But though with love and dreams of gold
She wove rare charms about that nest,
My heart lay aching still, and cold :
I could not rest, I could not rest.

III.

The birds are quiet on the boughs,
And quiet are my slumbering trees . . . .
O come a short while to my house
And share these evening silences.

Come ! for the sunset's weary smile
Has faded ; night is falling deep :
And we will rest a little while
And talk together ere we sleep.

IV.

It may be that in future years,
When life serenely yields its best
Of steadfast joy and fleeting tears,
And, blessing, you move on, thrice blest,—

Amid glad tasks of love and home,
And fond caresses every day,
A softened thought of me shall come
And fly to reach me when you pray ;

Then I shall tremble where I sit
Unhelped through those gray years to be,
As, like a benediction, it
Shall flood in sweetness over me.

THE RETURN

Margaret Sackville

Last night, within our little town
The Dead came marching through ;
In a long line, like living men,
Just as they used to do.

Only, so long a line it seemed
You'd think the Judgment Day
Had dawned, to see them slowly pass,
With faces turned one way.

They walked no longer foe and foe
But brother bound to brother ;
Poor men, common men they walked
Friendly to one another.

Just as in life they might have done
Who stabbed and slew instead . . . .
So quietly and evenly they walked
These million gentle dead.

TO———

I.

1

Was it for you the aching past alone
Lived, that on you might fall the shadow of it ?
For you, for you kings climbed a ravished throne,
And all these menacing, quenched fires were lit.
Wars that have left no more than a grey trace,
Where are they ? Scattered foam, blown dust—ah, me !
How have they found their way into your face ?
The new day is not yours, you only see
A battle raging in a desert place,
And blood-stained warriors seeking Sanctuary.

2

I cannot love you in the street ; I met
You in the street once and turned my head away,
But I will meet you where the red sunset
With forlorn fire flashes the leaping spray.
We are too old, too old for all this noise,
No wine of such new vintage shall control
Us who have known, what passionate joys
Once in some far, dark City of the Soul.
We are kings still and have, as kings, the choice
To spurn the proffered half and claim the whole.

3

Let us find out a new way ; for it is plain
That all these old, worn, trodden roads suffice
Only those who will return again
Seeking shelter in their homes from Paradise.
Oh ! let us find some solitary, green
Forgotten garden, where the sunrays fall

All blind and blurred and indistinct between
Cypresses lofty as earth's boundary wall ;
Beneath whose shade shall glimmer forth half seen
Your face through the soft darkness when I call.

II.

1

If one, with visionary pen, should write
The love which might be ours, how would he call
These strange, perplexing fires veiled servants light
Down the dark vistas of our empty hall?
That love which might be ours, how would he name
That love ? No bitter leaving of the brine,
No white or fading blossom twined like flame
Round any brow, Christian or Erycine,
Not all those loves blown to a windy fame
Shall find their counterpart in yours and mine.

2

Not Tristram, not Isolde, wild shades which dip
Their pinions like blown gulls in a waste sea,
Nor those mute lovers, who still, lip on lip,
Float on for ever, though they have ceased to be,
Not any of those who loved once ;—far apart
We wander ; the years have made us weak, we fail
To rush together with a single heart,
And we shall meet at last, only as pale
Autumnal mists no sun's shaft cleaves apart
When all the winds are still and no ships sail.

III.

1

Yet we shall meet—it may be we shall meet
And count our days up-gathered, one by one,
Like poppies plucked among the burnished wheat,
Beneath the red gaze of the August sun ;
And all our scattered dreams shall flutter home
At last. Oh ! silent, age-long wandering
What since your setting forth have ye become ?
What gift from those far waters do ye bring ?—
A splash of rain, salt taste of frozen foam,
Green sea-weed trailing from a broken wing.

2

Or we shall find each other—on the brink
Of sleep some day, when the cool evening airs
Blow bubbles round the pool where wood-birds drink ;
Or in the common Inn of wayfarers :
Both weary, both beside the wide fireplace
Drowsing, till at some sudden spark up-blown
Shall each awake to find there face to face
You and I very tired and alone ;
And lo ! your welcome from my eyes shall gaze
And in your eyes there shall I find my own.

3

I will pursue thee down these solitudes
Therefore, and thou shalt yet escape me not.
I will set traps for thee of subtle moods
And wound thee with the arrows of my thought.
In thickest forest ways though thou lie hid,

Or in some autumn vale of Brocelinde,
Or in whatever place of magic forbid,
I will pierce through the woven branches like a wind,
And drag thee from thy hiding-place amid
The secret laughter of the fairy-kind.

Margaret Sackville

4

Oh, triumph still delaying! I must pass
Lonely a long time yet, for I know well
No fugitive fair dream that ever was
Left anywhere traces where her footprints fell.
I, lonely hunter in the woods of sleep,
The hunt is up—away! I ride, I ride
On a white steed, where black-boughed fir-trees keep
Watch and the kindly world is shut outside.
I am afraid, the haunted woods are deep!
I am afraid—afraid! Where dost thou hide?

FRUITAGE

For her the proud stars bend, she sees,
As never yet, dim sorceries
Breaking in silver magic wide
On the blue midnight's swirling tide,
With arrowy mist and spearing flame
That out of central beauty came.
The innumerate splendours of the skies
Are thronging in her shining eyes ;
Her body is a fount of light
In the plumed garden of the night ;
Her lily breasts have known the bliss
Of the cool air's unfaltering kiss.
She is made one with loveliness,
Enfranchised from the world's distress,
Given utterly to joy, a bride
With a bride's hunger satisfied.
Now, though she heavily walk, and know
The sharp premonitory throe
And the life leaping in the gloom
Of her most blessed and chosen womb,
It is as though foot never was
So light upon the glimmering grass.
She is shot through with the stars' light,
Helped by their calm, unwavering might.
In tall, lone-swaying gravity
Stoops to her there the eternal tree
Whose myriad fruitage ripens on
Beneath the light of moon and sun.

IN THE WOOD

William
Kean
Seymour

Lone shadows move,
The night air stirs ;
This hour of dying
Dreams was hers.

In this dusk place
Her throat gleamed white
In glimmering beauty
Of starlight.

Nightingales sang
Exultant bliss ;
The snared stars saw us
Sway, and kiss.

Now the bats whirr,
The barn owls hoot,
Her loveliness
Is dust, is mute.

Peace comes not here,
No dream-bird trills :
They haunt her lodging
In the hills.

William Kean Seymour

SIESTA

Bring me some oranges on blue china,
With a jade-and-silver spoon,
And drowse on your silken mats beside me
In the burning noon.

Bring me red wine in cups of crystal,
With melons on chrysoprase,
And place them softly with jewelled fingers
Before my gaze.

Hasten, my dove of scented whisperings,
My lily, my Xacán!
Bring bubbling pipes for the cool shadows,
And my peacock fan.

And bid Isárrib, my chief musician,
Weave quiet songs within,
That my soul in the circles of a great glamour
May float and spin.

And O, you gaudy and whistling parrots
In your high, flowered maze,
Still your harsh, petulant quarrelling
With the mocking jays.

TO ONE WHO EATS LARKS

William Kean Seymour

Ah, my brave Vitellius !
Ah, your tastes are marvellous !
When you eat your singing birds
Do you leave the bones—and words,
The proud music in the throat ? . . . .
Not a note, not a note ?
Doubtless they were not so pleasant
As the brains of a young pheasant,
Or flamingoes' tongues, whose duty
Never was to utter beauty.
But they sang, but they fluted
And your rasping lies confuted,
And your ugliness laid bare
With a lyric in the air.
So you bought them on a string,
Dangling balls that used to sing,
And you gave them to the cook
With a fat and happy look.

But you ask me why this fuss !
Ah, my brave Vitellius,
I am never sure your stringers
May not string you other singers,
May not tire of lark and wren
And attempt to sell you men.
Please forgive me, but *I've* made
Certain songs . . . . and I'm afraid !

William Kean Seymour

IF BEAUTY CAME TO YOU

If Beauty came to you,
  Ah, would you know her grace,
And could you in your shadowed prison view
  Unscathed her face?

Stepping as noiselessly
  As moving moth-wings, so
Might she come suddenly to you or me
  And we not know.

Amid these clangs and cries,
  Alas, how should we hear
The shy, dim-woven music of her sighs
  As she draws near,

Threading through monstrous, black,
  Uncharitable hours,
Where the soul shapes its own abhorrèd rack
  Of wasted powers?

PRISON

Horace Shipp

I.

The dreadful days go up and up, to fall
Through twilight to the sleepless dusk again,
Like tortured flies upon a window pane.
Wingless or broken-winged,
They crawl and crawl . . . .
Meaningless, striving—nowhere after all,
Till one is tired of heeding.
Tired.
A stain of drab unloveliness the days remain
Unmoving now, save that across the wall,
A patch of sun behind a shadow of bars,
Creeps in a stupor,
Greys,
Grins bloodily,
Falters and dies.

Outside a day may slip
From noon-glow to a miracle of stars
With hours that flush and flood eternity;
Whilst here
The stagnant waters drip . . . . and drip.

II.

They tell me I have sinned; that long ago
(Weeks—or a cycle of eternity)
This thing of dead desire lived lustily,
Was stirred with passion, and sinned.
It may be so;
As seas or hills may be.
I only know God's world has shrunken,

Horace Shipp

And that misery,
Shrinking my heart, has closed her walls on me,
Till in the dead, still soul the senses grow
Carious as the ulcer of thought eats deep.
Heavy, the slow lusts pace the barren mind
From end to end.
Barred door and window,
Wall inexorable.
And the horrors creep on padded feet like warders.
Then the blind, pitiful night
When hot tears scald and fall.

III.

Grey day-break and the silence of the cell :
The dull, numb pain of waking,
Stillness . . .
Fear clutching oblivion ;
And then to hear
The brazen, blasphemous tolling of the bell,
A crash of doors,
Loud-clanging tins,
The swell of brutal voices nearer and more near,
Bursts at the last about you.
Clangour.
Queer delight of movement.
Then . . . the door shuts.
Hell darkens about you with the turning key,
The silence burns and sears you like a flame ;
It battens as the worm that never dies ;
Crawls back from distant noises ; palpably
Lurks through the rhythm of the feet of shame,
Watching and watching out of hooded eyes.

THE SIXTH DAY

Horace Shipp

" And God said ' Let us make man in our image
and let him have dominion ' . . . . "

God made you in His image, yet I saw
You stoop and seize a blind mole from the snare.
Blind.
Blind with terror . . . Blind
Your teeth gleamed bare behind the taut, white lips.
The trapper's law knows neither hate nor love.
You watched it paw,
Frantic with lust of life, the yielding air
And were amused.
God's Image !
Did you care, pitying one moment, see the swift hands
claw
For life and darkness, know and hate your trap ?
I saw your knuckles gleam, your hand swing free ;
A cry ;
The blind face crashed against the wall.
Then death and stillness and——
You grinned.
Mayhap,
Snaring the blind mole of humanity,
God made you in His image after all.

Edith Sitwell

EVENTAIL

Lovely Semiramis
Closes her slanting eyes :
Dead is she long ago,
From her fan sliding slow
Parrot-bright fire's feathers
Gilded as June weathers,
Plumes like the greenest grass
Twinkle down ; as they pass
Through the green glooms in Hell,
Fruits with a tuneful smell—
Grapes like an emerald rain
Where the full moon has lain,
Greengages bright as grass,
Melons as cold as glass
Piled on each gilded booth
Feel their cheeks growing smooth ;
Apes in plumed head-dresses
Whence the bright heat hisses,
Nubian faces sly,
Pursing mouth, slanting eye,
Feel the Arabian
Winds floating from that fan :
See how each gilded face
Paler grows, nods apace :
" Oh, the fan's blowing
Cold winds . . . . It is snowing ! "

THE LADY WITH THE SEWING-MACHINE

Edith Sitwell

Across the fields as green as spinach,
Cropped as close as Time to Greenwich,

Stands a high house ; if at all,
Spring comes like a Paisley shawl—

Patternings meticulous
And youthfully ridiculous.

In each room the yellow sun
Shakes like a canary, run

On run, roulade, and watery trill—
Yellow, meaningless, and shrill.

Face as white as any clock's,
Cased in parsley-dark curled locks—

All day long you sit and sew,
Stitch life down for fear it grow,

Stitch life down for fear we guess
At the hidden ugliness.

Dusty voice that throbs with heat,
Hoping with your steel-thin beat

To put stitches in my mind,
Make it tidy, make it kind,

You shall not : I'll keep it free
Though you turn earth, sky and sea

To a patchwork quilt to keep
Your mind snug and warm in sleep !

Edith Sitwell

PORTRAIT OF A BARMAID

Metallic waves of people jar
Through crackling green toward the bar

Where on the tables chattering-white
The sharp drinks quarrel with the light.

Those coloured muslin blinds the smiles,
Shroud wooden faces in their wiles—

Sometimes they splash like water (you
Yourself reflected in their hue).

The conversation loud and bright
Seems spinal bars of shunting light

In firework-spurting greenery.
O complicate machinery

For building Babel, iron crane
Beneath your hair, that blue-ribbed mane

In noise and murder like the sea
Without its mutability !

Outside the bar where jangling heat
Seems out of tune and off the beat—

A concertina's glycerine
Exudes, and mirrors in the green

Your soul : pure glucose edged with hints
Of tentative and half-soiled tints.

SOLO FOR EAR-TRUMPET

Edith Sitwell

The carriage brushes through the bright
Leaves (violent jets from life to light) ;
Strong polished speed is plunging, heaves
Between the showers of bright hot leaves
The window-glasses glaze our faces
And jar them to the very basis—
But they could never put a polish
Upon my manners or abolish
My most distinct disinclination
For calling on a rich relation !
In her house—(bulwark built between
The life man lives and visions seen)—
The sunlight hiccups white as chalk,
Grown drunk with emptiness of talk,
And silence hisses like a snake—
Invertebrate and rattling ache . . . .
Then suddenly Eternity
Drowns all the houses like a sea
And down the street the Trump of Doom
Blares madly—shakes the drawing-room
Where raw-edged shadows sting forlorn
As dank dark nettles. Down the horn
Of her ear-trumpet I convey
The news that " It is Judgment Day ! "
" Speak louder : I don't catch, my dear."
I roared : " *It is the Trump we hear !* "
" The *What ?* " " *THE TRUMP !* " " I shall complain !
. . . . the boy-scouts practising again."

Muriel Stuart

THE FATHER

The evening found us whom the day had fled,
Once more in bitter anger, you and I,
Over some small, some foolish, trivial thing
Our anger would not decently let die,
But dragged between us, shamed and shivering
Until each other's taunts we scarcely heard,
Until we lost the sense of all we said,
And knew not who first spoke the fatal word.
It seemed that even every kiss we wrung
We killed at birth with shuddering and hate,
As if we feared a thing too passionate.
However close we clung
One hour the next hour found us separate,
Estranged, and Love most bitter on our tongue.

To-night we quarrelled over one small head,
Our fruit of last year's maying, the white bud
Blown from our stormy kisses and the dead
First rapture of our wild, estranging blood.
You clutched him : there was panther in your eyes,
We breathed like beasts in thickets, on the wall
Our shadows in huge challenge seemed to rise,
The room grew dark with anger. Yet through all
The shame and hurt and pity of it you were
Still strangely and imperishably dear,
As one who loves the wild day none the less
That breaks in bitter hands the buds of Spring,
Whose cold hand stops the breath of loveliness,
And drives the wailing ghost of beauty past,
Making the rose,—even the rose, a thing
For pain to be remembered by at last.

I said : " My son shall wear his father's sword." Muriel
You said : " Shall hands once blossoms at my breast Stuart
Be stained with blood ? " I answered with a word
More bitter, and your own, the bitterest
Stung me to sullen anger, and I said :
" My son shall be no coward of his line
Because his mother choose " ; you turned your head
And your eyes grew implacable in mine.
And like a trodden snake you turned to meet
The foe with sudden hissing . . . . then you smiled,
And broke our life in pieces at my feet,
" Your child ? " you said : " *Your* child ? "

Muriel Stuart

THE SHORE

The low bay melts into a ring of silver,
And slips it on the shore's reluctant finger
Though in an hour the tide will turn, will tremble,
Forsaking her because the moon persuades him.
But the black wood that leans and sighs above her
No tide can turn, no moon can slave nor summon.
Then comes the dark : on sleepy, shell-strewn beaches,
O'er long pale leagues of sand and cold, clear water
She hears the tide go out towards the moonlight.
The wood still leans . . . . weeping she turns to seek
him,
And his black hair all night is on her bosom.

THELUS WOOD

Muriel Stuart

I came by night to Thèlus wood,
And though in dark and desperate places
Stubborned with wire and brown with blood
Undaunted April crept and sewed
Her violets in dead men's faces,
And in a soft and snowy shroud
Drew the scarred fields with gentle stitch ;
Though in the valley where the ditch
Was hoarse with nettles, blind with mud,
She stroked the golden-headed bud,
And loosed the fern, she dared not here
To touch nor tend this murdered thing ;
The wind went wide of it, the year
Upon this breast stopped short of Spring :
Beauty turned back from Thèlus Wood.

From broken brows the dim eyes stared,
Blistered and maimed the wide stumps grinned
From the black mouth of Thèlus bared
In laughter at some monstrous jest.
No creature moved there, weed nor wind.
Huge arms, half-torn from savage breast,
Hung wide, and tangled limbs and faces
Lay, as if giants blind and stark
With violent, with perverse embraces
Groped for each other in the dark.
A moaning rose—not of the wind,
—There was no wind, but hollowly
From its dim bed of mud each tree
Gave forth a sound, till trees and mud
Seemed but a single, sighing mouth,
A wound that spoke with lips uncouth,
And cried to me from Thèlus Wood.

I heard one tree say : " This was I
Who drew great clouds across the sky
To weep against me." This one said :
" I made a gloom where love might lie
All day and dream it night, a bed
Secret and soft, the birds' song had
A twilight sound the whole day there."
One said : " Last night I shook my hair
Before the mirror of the moon."
" I saw a corpse to-day," said one
" That was but buried yester-year."
And one, the smallest, sweetest thing—
A fair child-tree made never stir,
Dead before God had tended her
In the green nurseries of Spring.
She lay, the loveliest, loneliest,
Among the old and ruined trees,
And at each small and broken wrist
The white flowers grew like bandages.

Then from the ruined churchyard where
Old vaults and graves lay turned and tossed
And earth from earth was shaken bare,
Came murmurings of a tongueless host
That to each ghastly brother said :
" Who raised us from our sleep ? Is this
The resurrection of the dead ?
Upon our bodies no flesh grows,
No bright blood through our temples springs,
No glory spreads, no trumpet blows,
The air is not white and blind with wings.
And yet dragged up before us lie
The woods of Thèlus at our feet,
And strange hills sentinel the sky,

And where the road went yawns a pit.
The world is finished : let us sleep.
God has forgotten : we shall keep
Here a sweet, safe Eternity.
There is no other end than this,
And this is death, and that is peace."
But even as they ceased the stones
Were loosed, the earth shook where I stood,
And from far off the crouching guns
Swung slowly round on Thèlus Wood.

THE THIEF OF BEAUTY

The mind is Beauty's thief, the poet takes
The golden spendthrift's trail among the blooms
Where she stands tossing silver in the lakes,
And twisting bright swift threads on airy looms.
Her ring the poppy snatches, and the rose
With laughter plunders all her gusty plumes.
The poet gleans and gathers as she goes
Heedless of summer's end certain and soon,
Of winter rattling at the door of June.

II.

When Beauty lies hand-folded, pale and still,
Forsaken of her lovers and her lords,
And winter keeps cold watch upon the hill,
Then he lets fall his bale of coloured words.
At frosty midnight June shall rise in flame,
Move at his magic with her bells and birds,
The rose will redden as he speaks her name.
He shall release earth's frozen bosom there,
And with great words shall cuff the whining air.

THE HIGH WALL

W. R. Titterton

I will build up a wall for Freedom to dwell therein,
A high wall with towers
And steel fangs for a gate.
For Freedom that lacks a home falleth by pit and gin,
A prey to the alien powers
That lie in wait.

I will build up a house for her where the ways divide,
A house set on a hill,
With a lamp in the topmost tower,
And a trumpet calling to arms, and a flag like a flame
blown wide,
And a sword to save and to kill
As her bridal dower.

I will take her to wife, she that is life and death ;
Life—for a trumpet calls ;
Death—for it calls me still,
And I shall know love—a star, and a fluttering breath
Till the shadow of silence falls
In the house on the hill.

I will build up a house for her where the ways divide,
Four-square on the rock,
A high house and a great ;
So, when I fly, spent, back from a broken ride,
Her key shall cry in the lock,
She shall stand in the gate.

She shall stand in the gate—the prize of the world to win,
Stand steel-shod,
Crowned with a cloud of flowers.
I will build up a wall, a wall, for Freedom to dwell therein
In the name of the most high God,
A wall with towers.

W. R. Titterton

THE BROKEN SWORD

Soldier, soldier, burnishing your sword,
Is there no place for a wayfaring man in the courts of your lord ?
A couch, and a crust, and a song, and a flagon of wine ?
Haggard, begrimed though I be, and out at heel,
A lean, grey hop-and-go-one with a crutch of steel,
Brother-at-arms with death ? Behold the sign :

I have tasted great weather on high, white, green-turreted cliffs by the sea.
I have tramped the tough heather, the purple, the brown,
By pools of peat water ; from the night to the day,
Till the moon has dropped down : the ghost of a minim, low down,
In a high-piping treble of grey.

In shy, dim recesses, mid tresses, green tresses.
Slow dipping, caressing, I've heard
A whisper, a chuckle of laughter, a scamper ; and high,
High up in the air the cry, the call of a bird.
And when the night came with a flicker of wings
I have heard the earth breathing quiet and slow
Like a pulse in the tiny, wild tumult of things.

I have sung to the sun, and the moon and the stars,
In valleys uncharted of tumbled sea meadows
I have shouted aloud 'neath a sky whipped to smoke in the fret of my spars
And I fought as I fared ; and my couch was a camp ; and my songs were my scars.

Soldier ! Soldier ! Cosetting your sword !
Have you no place for a harper-at-arms in the courts of your lord—

W. R. Titterton

Prim fountains, clipped trees, and trim gardens, and music, and rest ?
Nay, keep your sugared delights and your margents embroidered ! My life is the best.
In my ears is the sound of a bugle blown, and my pulses like kettle-drums beat
For the hungry blind onset, the rally, the stubborn defeat.
I, too, could have polished, and polished, and jeered at the wayfaring man who passed by.
But I follow the fighting Apollo.
And I stand unashamed ; and I raise up my shard of a sword ; and I cry the old cry.
Please God they shall find but a hilt in my hand when I die !

W. R.
Titterton

NIGHT-SHAPES

Dark hurrying shapes beset my path that night—
Pushing and buffeting ; and in my brain
Dark hurrying shapes beset my soul. In vain
I struggled ; as a fevered dreamer might ;
Or some spent, breathless swimmer, in despite
Of desperate stroke, thrust headlong to the main.
The waking nightmare, monstrous and inane,
Whirled, rushed, and huddled in its random flight.

Like a spent swimmer, battling with a swoon,
Silent I fought, yet seemed to cry aloud.
When, at the challenge of a marching tune,
Heard in a sudden stillness of the crowd,
I looked aloft, and saw the great round moon
Steadfast behind her ragged rout of cloud.

THE SILENT PEOPLE

W. R. Titterton

The Silent People of No Man's Land
Calm they lie,
With a stare and vacant smile
At the vacant sky.
Over them swept the battle,
And stirred them not.
Armies passed over, beyond them.
They are forgot.

Calmly the earth deals with them,
Melts them away.
Nothing is left of them now but bones,
Bones and clay.
Bones of the Valley of Judgment,
Bones stripped clean.
We fought, day in, day out, and the others,
With this between.

Dawn comes white and finds them
Stark and cold.
Twilight creeps over and covers them,
Fold on fold.
Night cannot hide them from us.
In the dark, again,
We see the Silent People
Who once were men.

The Silent People of No Man's Land,
They rise, they rise,
With the glory of utter loss
In their stary eyes.
Beckoning, beckoning, calling,
Pointing the way.
But the dawn comes white, and finds them
Bones and clay.

W. R. Titterton

Winds of the world blow o'er them
Your serenade !
Touch like a lute the broken earth
Where our dead are laid !
Broken bones of the martyrs,
Reliques of pain,
Anoint them, anoint them with sunlight,
Robe them in rain.

The Silent People of No Man's Land
Calm they lie,
Bones, broken and bleached,
Under the sky.
Over them sweeps the tempest,
And stirs them not.
We pass over, beyond them,
They are forgot.

LAMPS AND LANTERNS

E. H.
Visiak

When I had sight, great glamour was
In myriad lamps of coloured glass :
Old lamps for new I never sold ;
For old were new, and new were old.

And Chinese lanterns, paper globes,
Were Dragon Gods in tissue robes
That stood on air with squat round shoon,
Beneath the thin, receded Moon.

E. H. Visiak

STRANDED

Dusk gathers. On the seaward hedge
The wild hops, hanging bright,
Gleamas a foam-spray flung on sedge
From a sea of golden light.

A ship lies heavy on the sands
Above the warped, wan tide,
Whose waves thrust ineffectual hands
Beneath its murmuring side.

They cannot lift the monstrous hulk,
Nor break the ghostly spell ;
The ship lies dreaming, all her bulk
Racked on a shoal of hell.

I hear the sullen timbers creak,
With echoings deep and numb ;
No other sound : nor groan nor shriek ;
For agony is dumb !

But at the seams, in every crack,
A beaded sweat appears :
The soul that's stretched on such a rack
Can shed no other tears !

RUBBLE

Alec Waugh

We may fill the daytime with friendship
And laughter and song ;
But however the laughter may trip
And the words break in song
On a loved one's lip ;
And however gaily the road may bend
Into the sky,
It must come to this in the end,
That we stand
And watch the last friend
Turn with a half-felt sigh
And a wave of the hand ;
And silence is over the day,
Shadows fall,
And our happiness crumbles away
Like a wall
That nobody cares for,
That falls stone by stone
Till its grandeur is rubble once more,
And we are alone.

Charles Williams

CHRISTMAS

Word through the world went
On Christmas morn,—
' Tidings ! behold, a
Townsman is born ! '

Then in their council
Smiled the high lords :
' Sword for world-conquest
' Mid a world's swords.
Need shall our armies
Have of each birth,
In that last battle
Wins us the earth.'

Still were the priesthood,
Singing the Mass :
' Lo, is our creed come
Truly to pass ?
Blesséd and broken
Crumbs that we give,
Say ! say, O chalice,
Can a creed live ?

Then to lord Shakespeare,
Brooding alone,
While in a vision
Lear was shown,
While his just loathing
Hung over men,
Lo, from the darkness
Came Imogen.

Then said a free maid,
Heart against mine,—
'Take me, lord governor,
Who am all thine!
Thou that hast blessed me
With a new light,
Ah, is thy handmaid
Fair in thy sight?'

Then said our Lady,—
'Clean is the hut,
Filled are the platters,
And the door shut.
Sit, O son Jesus!
Sit thou, sweet friend!
Poor folk have supper
And their woes end.'

'Now,' said our Father,
'All things are won:
Welcome, O Saviour!
Welcome, O Son!
More than creation
Lives now again,
God hath borne Godhead
Nowise in vain.'

Word went through Sarras
On Easter morn,—
'Tidings! behold a
Townsman is born!'

Charles Williams

BRISEIS

The footfalls of the parting Myrmidons
    And counter-cries of leaguer and of town
    Are hushed behind her as the silks drop down ;
Alone she stands, and wonderingly cons
Heads circleted with gold or helmed with bronze ;
    Higher her eyes from crown to loftier crown
    Creep, till they fall, nigh-blasted, at the frown
Of Argos, throned in his pavilions

And mid his captains wrathfully aware
    How the plague smites the host, how by the sea
Beyond the ships, with vengeful prayer and oath,
Rages the young Achilles, of whose wrath
    Innocent, ignorant, a captive, she
Sees but the dropped staff on the voided chair.

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